World History

C. L. Mariwalla

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1. ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

by

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For

My brother,

Kan,

Who

has just moved out into the wide World

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INTRODUCTORY

It is being growingly realised all over the world that we must now think in terms of the world as a whole. But before this becomes feasible, it is necessary that we must know our world more intimately than we have done so far. Accordingly the study of World History has been assigned a place of importance in the courses of study, both at the School and the College stage, in all advanced countries. There are, however, many, who are outside the class-room study. They too wish to know how man has evolved from barbarism to civilization, and how varied regions and various nations have contributed their mite to the grand spectacle of modern civilization. But they have neither the time, nor the money, for voluminous treatises on the subject. Even the school and college youngsters want something short and sweet. To answer this need the present attempt has been made. The author lays no claim to erudition or scholarship, or to comprehensiveness, for his present endeavour. All he seeks is to present to growing and inquisitive minds sufficient material, conveniently put in the essay form, to afford them a vivid idea of how nations have gone to make the world what it is. He is grateful to the authors of various books—Indian, English, and American—on which he has considerably drawn, in the course of the last dozen years, while teaching World History at the

College stage.

The story of man as taken up in the present essays commences from the time when Man had come out from the jungle, to lead an independent life, outside and apart, from the animal world. As soon as he domesticated the animals for food purposes he tumbled on Agriculture, and began to localise himself in the Valleys of great rivers. The Valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris, the Indus, the Yangtse and the Hwang-ho, on this account, occupy a place of prominence in the present study. The river henceforward became a live force in human civilization. Apart from the river valleys, the grassy belts and oases also sheltered intelligent human communities. Due to exigencies of circumstance, however, these people had to migrate in search of more convenient regions, and thus commenced race movements, affecting vitally the destiny of civilization. These migrants, in course of time, having secured their destined opportunity, gave rise to other great civilizations, apart from the river civilizations, like those of ancient India, Persia, Greece, Rome, Syria, Palestine and Arabia. And then the world suddenly was enveloped by a dark age, to be reborn in its modern shape. The present study closes with the advent of the Dark Age. The story of man will be completed and brought upto date in a subsequent volume.

It is hoped that the book will serve the desired purpose

Bombay, 20th July 1950. C. L. MARIWALLA

WORLD HISTORY

-ITS SCOPE AND UTITITY

According to the modern connotation of the term, history is a chronicle of man's condition in the past.

What it is

As such history concerns itself with the lot of the common man. History therefore is a truthful record of man's past.

In history we trace the condition of man at varying periods of time in a given country or region, and incidentally place him not only in his national background, but also determine his position and that of his country in the world at large. History therefore is a complete study of man in his environment, national and international. In a study of this kind we have to take notice of all the important aspects of the life of man. We have got to study his material as well as spiritual condition, and we have to determine if he is progressing or retarding in his condition. It has now been accepted that man by himself is a creature of evolution and as such he is a progressive creature. It may be that the progress is very slow, sometimes virtually amounting to nothing, but it is very rare that man ever goes back to a primitive condition from the one in which he was at the beginning of his career. In any case man

either progresses or maintains at least a *status quo*, and the non-progressive condition of man is usually conditioned by the activities of nature or his own. For instance the domination, political and economic, of a country by another would make that country's condition virtually static Likewise a terrific onslaught of nature, like an ice-age, would make man start afresh all over. On the whole, however, there is continuity in the history of man – the continuity in progress or evolution, and therefore the true theme of history is man's growth from barbarism to civilization. Civilization does not imply man's progress merely in material life, but it also relates itself to man's spiritual evolution, for, as man grapples with life purely material he becomes growingly conscious of a power that controls nor merely the material life but also man and the universe itself. Civilization registers the progress of man in all the major aspects of his life-existence It will include man's progressing physical condition, mental condition, and spiritual condition, and notice how man endeavours to harness nature for his good.

As far as it is known man was one among the animals at the creation of the world, but, endowed as he was with an intellect and an intelligence, he utilized these special powers and began to lead a more easy and a still more comfortable life than his compatriots in the animal-world. He was a barbarian and a savage like all other animals of the jungle, but he soon realized that though there was an amount of

pleasure in the jungle-life there was a greater pleasure in a life outside the jungle, based on sense. Therefore it is that once man had tasted the fruits of intelligence, he continued to utilize his intelligence for a saner and more harmonious life. The result has been that man has evolved always a better life, material and spiritual, though at certain periods, due to circumstances, progress in the two aspects has been disproportionate. It is in this wise that man has attained a certain position when he is able to realise that his condition is far superior to that of the animals among whom he originally lived, and that he is the best creation of the Lord and is able to discern his future. He is therefore able to hitch his wagon to the star. By this very ideal he proves that the true theme of history is man's growth from barbarism to civilization.

Its Utility

Dealing as it does with the condition of man in the past, history indeed is a useful study. It not only chronicles how man has grown in the past, but it incidentally also concerns itself with the capability of man. For a proper understanding of any matter or thing, it is necessary to know its antecedents. It is on this account that a physician not only studies the existing condition of his patient, but also inquires about the patient's normal condition and behaviour in the recent and remote past. The physical condition of the individual at the moment does give an indication of the ailment of the patient, but it is his past

career that throws a flood of light on the true condition of the patient and clears up any doubts and adds up many useful hints for the proper understanding of the patient's real state. Thus the past history of the patient clears up the present condition in which he stands. An average citizen is like the physician of the world, who in his own interest must know the present in all its detail, and for that proper understanding of the present he must have a through grasp of man's record of growth. History therefore is one of the most useful studies a citizen of the world must undertake.

Apart from a proper understanding of the present, history also throws light on the proper understanding of the future and in many cases directs the future. The record of man's state in the past places at the disposal of the citizen experience under varied conditions through which man has passed to arrive at the present stage. And therefore an individual of today, looking at the trends of the present, might compare them with similar trends in the history of man, and from that record of man he may be able to know what the future may be. If there is an action there is a reaction. A similar cause will have a similar effect and therefore the trends of the past and their result would be able to inform man in the present what his future might be in the light of the conditions obtaining at present. And a man who is alert and alive, appreciating what the effects of the present trends may be, in order to

avoid these results, can endeavour to change the conditions and thus alter the results in the future. And every citizen is supposed to be alert and alive, and as such the future depends upon him. The historical past indicates to the individual, causes and effects. He knows the causes operating at present and therefore it is within his bounds to shape the future as he desires. History not only makes the present clearer than it would be otherwise, but it also throws a flood of light on the future and helps man to shape that future. Because history deals with the condition of man in the past, it is more or less a biographical study. It is a chronicle of the failure and success of the varying ambitions of different individuals, and since every individual in the present is also ambitious, he might know from a record of history whether he will be able to realize his ambition and how, and at the same time he would know the price he would have to pay for the realization of that ambition. History therefore is an open book of life dealing with a greater variety of men and a greater variety of ambitions than the people of the present and their ambitions, and it can therefore become a sure guide for the fulfilment of the aim a man has kept before himself in the present existence.

As history describes the varied condition of man in the past, it acts as a great discipline on the movement of man today. An intelligent person ought to thrive by past experience, and history, affording as

it does past experience, denotes the line that the individual must take, and therefore acts as a great check and a great discipline on the conduct of man. It therefore keeps him within bounds or can keep him within bounds, and man acting on the advice of history will surely make a great success of his life.

It is thus evident that history lights up the present, shapes the future, directs individual ambition and disciplines the conduct of man. It therefore ought to form one of the most fundamental studies in the curriculum of the citizen of the present.

EARLY MAN

- PALAEOLITHIC AND NEOLITHIC

The earliest phase in the life-struggle of man for the conquest of civilization is that very remote period when man was able to emerge from the animal-world and chalk out a distinctive life for himself. This period of human history is signified by the stone, which came very handy to man in his struggle to master nature for his good, and hence that epoch of human history is called the Age of Stone. In this Stone Age which extended from 50,000 B. C. to about 5000 B. C. two distinct periods are discernible and accordingly the Stone Age is divided into the Early Stone Age, better styled as the Palaeolithic Age, and the Later Stone Age, likewise denominated as the Neolithic Age. This early epoch of human history has a peculiar interest of its own in this that it affords to us an opportunity to see how our original ancestors struggled through life and successfully, and this account therefore urges us to put forth similar effort if we wish to make a success in life.

The Palaeolithic man, belonging to the Old Stone Age, was a short-statured, chin-less, bushy man, who could hop about but could not walk, and who was just struggling to better his lot in comparison to the life of

other animals of the world. In contrast the Neolithic man was tall and straight with human teeth and a chin, to afford a rounding of the human face, more intelligent and capable, on the right path to culture and civilization, in right earnest.

Shape & Form

The Palaeolithic man was a cave-man. His dwelling invariably was the natural cave, within which he protected himself by installing a huge stone at its entrance. Man occupied only those caves which were near a natural source of water-supply, since man had not yet evolved anything to store things in. Towards the end of the Palaeolithic Age man had learnt the pleasure of living in the open, when he could fully arm himself against any attacks. In contrast to this Neolithic man had ceased to be a cave-man. He believed in living in the open, in thatched cottages on land with a high fence around it, or in the middle of lakes and rivers, thus providing protection against animal attack.

Dwelling

In those early times the Palaeolithic man utilized the food as he found it ready in nature—he used the flesh of animals, fish, fowl and fruits. He had not yet understood and appreciated the delicacy of cooked food. Man in the Palaeolithic times had no permanent source of food-supply He had to depend on the nature of the region in which he lived. In the

Food

Neolithic times however, man had discovered the use of milk and of agricultural commodities and though he did not give up utilizing the flesh of animals and fish for food purposes, his main source of supply was now more reliable and definite, since cultivable land was a permanent source and so were the milk-giving animals. Man in the Neolithic Age had fully realized the benefits accruing from the use of fire, particularly in cooking and lighting. He had also felt the necessity of storing things to minimise his exertions and came to master the craft of the potter. He at first utilized hand-made pottery, but later became acquainted with wheel-made pottery also.

Attire

In regard to clothing in the Palaeolithic times man did not need much of clothing since he had a lot of hair on his body, which acted as a natural protection. However, for any emergent use man utilized the skins of the animals he hunted and ate, as his dress. In the Neolithic times more of stitching and sewing was resorted to and when man realised the utility of cotton, better human clothing was devised.

Tools and Weapons

The ordinary requirments of man could not be possibly satisfied without the use of certain primary weapons and tools, and it is the materials of tools and weapons that gives the name to this Age. Man found stone quite handy and useful for his purposes in his very acute struggle for survival. The tools and implements

of the Palaeolithic man were very simple. He sharpened pieces of stone just so much as sufficed to fell the animals, whose flesh he wanted for his food. The tools were therefore comparatively crude and unpolished, but all the same they were quite useful. They were limited in number and they sufficed for the moment. In contrast the tools and weapons of the Neolithic man were more varied and better polished. They were better made and answered the expanding needs of man. The most important and and common tools of the Palaeolithic man were knives, scrapers and arrows, and the most important and useful tool of the Neolithic man was the stone-axe with the wooden handle.

Art and Religion

In the realms of art the Palaeolithic man proved to be superior to the Neolithic. The practice of art is possible if man has leisure. The Palaeolithic man had limited requirements and consequently had some free time, which he utilized in ornamenting his existence. The environment of his house was not very pleasing. He therefore tried to decorate the inside and outside walls of the cave, in which he lived, with engravings and designs. Man in the Palaeolithic times had acquired a sense of beauty and the pictures that he drew show his aesthetic sense. The drawings and engravings on the walls of the caves are realistic and beautiful. The frieze of horses and other animals on the caves at Altamira and Cap Blanc are a living testimony to his artistic genius. Palaeolithic man had

also learnt the use of colours and he utilized yellow, red and black pigments to decorate his pictures. His drawings and engravings relate only to the animals he hunted. The Neolithic man in contrast had not much spare time and hence he could not take to art. At the same time Neolithic man in his struggle for life acquired the supreme knowledge of the power beyond man—the power of God. He therefore evolved religion. He believed in ancestor-worship and in the worship of a Universal Being - the Sun God. He learnt to thank that God by making simple offerings to him in the temple like the stone-henge and likewise sought his benediction through the same channel. Man had also come to believe since the late Palaeolithic Age in life-after-death and therefore with the dead human body were buried his normal materiai requisites.

The period of human history extending from 50,000 B. C. to 5000 B. C., though a very extensive period of human existence, is only the formative period in the glorious history of man. The Palaeolithic Age lasted upto 10,000 B. C., after which began the Neolithic Age. In the Palaeolithic times man was primarily a hunter living in caves, but in the Neolithic times he emerges out of his wild jungle seclusion into the open arena of the world and becomes the herdsman of the herds he formerly hunted. He is therefore on his way to the mastery of nature and his early struggle is a noble example indeed, for his modern successors to emulate.

EGYPT

– THE VALLEY OF THE NILE

With the advent of agriculture in the life of man it occurred to him that under the existing circumstances he could lead a more settled life than before by localising himself in those areas where physical conditions were conducive to a prosperous agricultural life. The valleys of great rivers therefore attracted man and thus the river became a live force in human civilization. The valleys of great rivers drew communities of men within their orbits and with agricultural prosperity came leisure, responsible for innovations in human life. Man began paying attention to industries, art and architecture, religion and all that which makes up culture and civilization of a community.

The Nile owns an extensive and fertile valley and it was able to lure communities of men, who settled down to a prosperous life. The Egyptians were able to develop their life all round and were able to register an amount of progress which indeed has been a great legacy to posterity. A study of Egyptian Civilization has a peculiar and particular charm of its own.

Quite early in their life the Egyptians developed a governmental form and this was the first type of

organised government in the history of man. Their historical chronicles record 31 dynasties covering a period of nearly four and a half thousand years.

Government

At the commencement of their career there arose among them the need for a leader who should impartially satisfy their agricultural requirements. The Irrigation Chief was thus the earliest political head among the Egyptians. The Irrigation Chief in time to come became the head of the state on account of divine sanction in the Pyramid Age and thus irrigational chieftainship gave place to theocracy. In course of time the power of the kings dwindled due to tyranny of some and the weakness of others, and the nobles came to enjoy political power, ushering-in an era of Feudalism. Feudalism gave place to an Imperial rule under kings. When the people were tired of the selfishness of the nobility, they joined hands with the kings, who with the aid of a standing army and the general support of the population, not only became supreme in Egypt, but erected an extensive empire, extending from Persia in the east to the Sahara in the west; from the Mediterranean in the north to the Fourth Cataract of the Nile in the south. Quite early taxes were devised to pay for political organisation and for a very long time those taxes were moderate and were payable in kind, mainly in agricultural produce, including wine and honey. Towards the commencement of the Imperial Age the Egyptians gave to the world its first currency in the shape of rings of gold and copper of a fixed weight,

which came to be paid as taxes in lieu of agricultural produce.

Army

For purposes of defence in the early period of Egyptian history a standing army was not considered necessary, but, with the successful invasions of Egypt by the Hyksos it was realised that an army was essential. During the Feudal Age there was no national army, but the nobility maintained private armies of their own. The king however was able to crush the power of the nobility by the use of a strong army and was able to create an empire for the Egyptians with the aid of the same tool, and therefore in the most glorious period of Egyptian History the Standing Army became the bulwark of the Empire. Thus was evolved an organised government in the Valley of the Nile

Industries & Commerce

Under a highly organized central and local administration the Egyptians were able to evolve an advanced cultural life and were able to develop their industries and commerce. Originally agriculture flourished along the banks of the Nile; later irrigational canals from the river brought further areas under the plough and still later in their history artificial water-works succeeded in harnessing even the distant regions of land in Egypt. At the commencemnt of their agricultural career the Egyptians used the hoe as their most important agricultural implement, but soon after they were able to evolve the plough, the ox-driven plough, and other

suitable agricultural implements. They raised wheat, barley, cotton, flax, fruits and vegetables, and dates. They also domesticated animals—the ox for ploughing, the cow and other similar quadrupeds for milk, and the donkey for drought purposes and as a pack-animal. Among the industries the Egyptians developed the cotton textile industry, the copper industry, the jeweller's art, the crafts of the furniture-maker, the potter, the tile-maker and the builder of ships. That the Egyptians had far advanced in their manufactures is attested by the attendant prosperity resulting from a highly flourishing commerce with the most civilized nations of that day, and the same may be perceived from the palaces and tombs like those of Tutenkhamon and Ramses II. In their commercial enterprise the Egyptians controlled both Asiatic and Mediterranean waters. Thus the people of the Valley of the Nile were able to develop a highly civilized material life.

With material prosperity came the possibility of cultural developement. The most important aspect of the cultural life of these riverine people was the evolution of a religious philosophy. Originally the Egyptians believed only in one God—the God of the Sun, Ra-Amon. But later on they created the God of the Dead, God Osiris, his consort Isis and their child Horus, along with many local gods and goddesses, totalling nearly 2200 in all. The religious belief of the people, though it started rationally—with one Master of the Universe, the God of the Sun or the God of the Living,—became later in their history illogical and

superstitious and plunged the people in the abyss of ignorance. The result was that about the 14th century B. C. the Egyptians had no worthy religion and all seemed to go badly with the people. However under Ikhnaton, during the same century, was evolved the most thought-provoking philosophy of life and a rational religion. It sounded the death-knell of the power of the priests, who had been so puffed-up by their privilege that they had clouded the simple truth of life in the coils of form and ceremony. Ikhnaton has been called the first idealist in human history. He by his personal experience was able to realise that there was a kind father of humanity, who was unlike the ferocious gods of the priests. He believed that religion was the private affair of the individual and the belief in a religious dogma and the propitiation of God was a voluntary matter for the individual. In his religious thought we perceive not only strict monotheism or belief in One God, but also the developement of a philosophy regarding the personality of the Lord, which has not been surpassed even in modern times. God according to Ikhnaton was not a localised personality, but was an all-pervading spirit, omniscient and omnipotent, formless and intangible He was to be respected and offered prayers and presents as automatically and voluntarily as the human father. Ikhnaton also evolved the idea of the forgiving nature of the Lord, provided there was true penitence offered by the individual. Thus Ikhnaton's religion was a simple

Religion

philosophy unenmeshed by formality or other complexity, and the practice of religion became a voluntary affair. The simplicity of the faith and its voluntary practice impressed the Egyptians as it would impress people even now, and Ikhnaton thus carved out a unique place for himself in human history. He however became so narrow-minded as to banish priests and close down the old temples, thus creating a very suspicious atmosphere with regard to his religious philosophy. Ikhnaton was also a great social reformer. Women had come to occupy an unworthy and backward position in the social order in Egypt, so much so that they could not even dine with their husbands. And, Ikhnaton was the first to realise the loss to human culture and civilization, resulting from women being accorded a place of no consequence in the social structure. It was his conviction that women, like men, could contribute to human progress provided they were afforded an opportunity to do so, and he therefore advocated the doctrine of equality of opportunity, social freedom and an honourable status to women, in his country. It is true that the religion and social philosophy of Ikhnaton died with him, because these were revolutionary innovations in the life of the Egyptians; nevertheless, in the history of human evolution he undoubtedly stands as a land-mark and a sign-post, guiding human progress.

The Egyptians in addition to a religious philosophy also developed their artistic genius, which can be perceived in the many great monuments that stand

alive even today. The most characteristic feature of their art and architecture was massivity. They built and created like giants. Their buildings are extensive in area and their master-pieces of art boast of the same quality. As examples we might take the Pyramid and the Hall of Columns in the Temple at Karnak as fine specimens of their art and architecture. The Great Pyramid of Egypt was built of solid rockstone consisting of 23 million pieces, each weighing two and half tons, occupying an area of 13 acres of land, with its base-side extending to 756 feet and its height nearly to 500 feet. The peculiar shape of the structure, the erection of well-sized halls within its interior, and the comparative antiquity of the structure, denote the masterful personality of its architect and builder. The Hall of Columns, likewise 338 feet long, 170 feet wide, going to a height of nearly 70 feet, and standing on 136 pillars, signifies the highest advancement in architecture the like of which has not been seen since. The inside walls of the halls of the Pyramid are decorated with pictures depicting the life of the king buried there-in, and are fine specimens of the massive art of the Egyptians. The Great Sphinx, adorning the Great Pyramid, is 160 feet long and goes to a height of 70 feet, affording the best example of the Egyptian sculpture and the mastery of the Egyptian Sculptor in animal sculpture. The designs on the floor and roof of the Hall of Columns and the carvings of the Imperial Masters of Egypt, who built the Karnak

Art and architecture

Temple, vindicate the claim of the artist and the sculptor of Egypt to extra-ordinary skill in dealing with hard materials and difficult objects. The Egyptians undoubtedly were massive builders and massive artists, who built and created things which can be appreciated even after the passage of nearly 5000 years.

Writing, Literature & Science

Apart from the progress registered by the Egyptians described above, the people of the Nile Valley afford to us further examples of their endeavours and adventures in the realms of culture and civilization. Their commercial enterprise and maintenance of Government Records necessitated the development of a device which could aid human memory and at the same time be the vehicle for the expression of human thought. Writing thus emerged as the effective instrument to answer their purpose. The most adventurous among the Egyptians attempted this supreme task, and starting with a purely Pictorial type of writing, they ultimately evolved, about the middle of the fourth millennium before Christ, an Alphabet of 24 letters. This involved two intermediate stages, namely, the Ideographic and the Phonetic; and all this became possible because of the zest the Egyptians possessed to make the best of life. The Egyptians wrote on Papyrus, a reed growing along the banks of the Nile, duly dried and gummed-up into scrolls, limited in width but unlimited in length, with a wooden pen sharpened and charred at one end, and ink made up of water, gum and the black soot of the kitchen.

They also had produced a wooden desk, which could accommodate their writing-materials and facilitate their writing. One of the Egyptian scrolls lies in the British Museum today and extends to 135 feet, while it is only 17 inches wide. Having developed the art of writing, whose importance every individual easily appreciates, the Egyptians produced extensive literature, particularly in the Age of Nobles, under whose patronage such a thing was feasible or possible. Among the vast Egyptian Literature may be noticed their best prose-writing, "The Adventures of Sinuhe," which describes the exploits at sea of an Egyptian mariner, and compares well with the well-known epics of the world. The Drama of Osiris, depicting the career of man after-death in the most realistic terms, is the earliest illustrated drama recorded in human history. The Egyptians also produced a book of medicine, both internal and external, which shows how advanced they must have been in this science. The Papyrus containing the treatise on Medicine is known as the Edwin Smith Scroll and gives definitions of the varied parts of the human frame, which could not be improved upon even by modern men of medicine. For example the brain is thus described: "the nervous control of the lower limbs is localised in the brain", and the heart is termed as 'the driving power in a system of which it is the centre'. Not only was the science of medicine developed, but at the same time druggist's notes and signs were also evolved. Along with the medical science, magical incantations came to be

used for curative purposes and some of these have been found efficacious even now. Above all, the written records of the Egyptians go to show that fractional Arithmetic and the Decimal System had been known to them and that they had acquired definite knowledge of Algebra and Geometry. That they were experts in Geometry is proved by their peculiar architecture, which is so very regular in form in spite of its angularity. Some of their definitions with regard to areas of varied objects is very amusing. According to them the area of a circle was the square of 8/9ths of the diameter. The Egyptians also had mastered the science of Mechanics, without the use of which their solid architecture would not have been possible. It is thus evident that the Egyptians have made solid contribution to literature and science. Along with an instrument to express their ideas through, the Egyptians also brought into existence a device to count time. They started with a Lunar Calendar and ended with a Solar one, consisting of 12 months of 30 days each ending with 5 holy-cum-holidays. Their year consisted of three seasons of four months each starting with July, commencing with the season of the Inundation, called "Shemut," succeeded by one commencing with November called the season of the Coming Forth or "Shat", and ended with one commencing from March called the season of the Harvest or "Pert". Their years were originally named after the important events which took place in them and the Palermo Stone, deposited in the museum at Palermo in Sicily, descri-

bes the names of the years in this fashion, from 3400 to 2700 B. C. Later, the Egyptians evolved the method of Kingly Eras, to number their years, which is the current mode of counting time even now, though modern chronology recognises Prophet Eras that are unending, unlike Egyptian Kingly Eras, which came to a close with the disappearance of the individual ruler. The Egyptians also developed a day-clock, made of wood, and dependent on the sun to mark time by its shadow, in the days of the greatest emperor of Egypt, Thutmose III. The two developments—that of Writing and the Calendar alone entitle Egypt to a great place in history.

It is thus evident that the Egyptians were a hardy race of people, who once they found an opportunity to settle in a land of plenty, could evolve something tangible in human civilization, which makes their record memorable. The river indeed became a true force of culture and advancement.

IKHNATON

– THE EGYPTIAN MESSIAH

Every man as he is, is the product of History. The past has an indelible mark on man's personality. His life in every aspect is the result of the ideas and institutions of the past. He lives in an environment that is nothing but the result of countless ages that have gone before him. And he contributes his own mite to make up the future man. Each man influences the world, though some affect it negligibly and others greatly. Those who affect life greatly are comparatively few, but still the world does not know them all. We may have heard of Lord Krishna, Sri Rama, Lord Buddha, Samrat Asoka, the great Akbar, Confucius and others in the East, and of the Hebrew Prophets and the Prophet of Islam in the Middle East, but that is not all. There are some whose records we do possess, but the contribution of others is hidden in our rich Mother Earth. One such is an Egyptian. He is Ikhnaton, "the first known idealist of the world". This great reformer might have remained unknown for ever, but for the archaeologists, who excavated old Egypt and opened an arena unknown to the world till then.

The special endeavour of Ikhnaton seems to have

been in the field of religion and social practices. And in order to appreciate and form a correct estimate of his contribution, it becomes necessary to have a glimpse of the religious beliefs of Egypt before Ikhnaton. This "most remarkable genius of the early world", reigned from 1375 to 1358 B. C. This was the time when Egypt had built up an extensive empire, extending from the banks of the Euphrates—covering Syria, Palestine, Egypt—to the Fourth Cataract of the Nile. The Egyptians had early imbibed the notion of Gods. We find that terror had been greatly responsible in the formation of this notion. But this was not the only force. The various natural phenomena had also influenced them. They believed in two main Gods. Osiris was their God of the Dead, the God who helped men to revive in the other world after they had left this. This God was also considered the Sole Judge of the other world, since he is pictured to be presiding over the ceremony of a dead man's heart being weighed against a feather, as the crucial test of bliss in that world. So the Egyptians also believed in after-life and therefore they kept a Book of the Dead along-side of the coffin of the dead man in order that he might read the book and appreciate for himself the difficulties ahead, which were boldly pictured in it, and make possible amends before he is presented to God Osiris. The Egyptians seem to have a notion that Gods must have spouses and each pair should have at least one son. So Osiris had a consort known as Isis and their

Early religious beliefs

son was Horus. This was their God of the Dead. Their God of the Living was Ra-Amon, as he was called at Thebes, the capital of Egypt at the time of Ikhnaton. He was the Sun God who was universally worshipped. He was held in great esteem and the priesthood of this God acquired immense power in no time. The Pyramid eventually became the symbol of this God and its Food and Drink Chamber was later transformed into the Temple of Ra-Amon. But that was not all. Each place had its local god and each town considered its own god as the most powerful. We have thus a record number of these gods in Egypt amounting to 2200 in all. Now, because of the multiplicity of gods the power of each god was limited. He was the presiding authority of the place where he was worshipped. He had no influence whatever over any other town or village. As pointed out before, gods were considered fierce-beings, who would strike at any time, and therefore it was considered highly obligatory that regular sacrifices be made at their altar to propitiate them and invoke them when needed. Sacrifices of animals were therefore a common phenomenon in the early Egyptian times.

Originally the Egyptian religious beliefs were quite simple, although their worship was unintelligent. As time passed the priestly class took hold of the people and as Egypt grew, so grew the power of the priests. Egypt, just before Ikhnaton, was at the height of her power. She had attained a state of luxury that is unsurpassed in the East And at the

same time it had come under the firm heel of the priesthood of Ra-Amon, "the proudest and the most conservative community" ever known. "It demanded implicit obedience to its strict and ancient conventions and the worship had become a complicated and exacting business, as intellectually low as its state of organisation was high and pompous." The luxurious civilization in Egypt had thus given rise to a great increase "in the outward ceremonial and inward emptiness of the State Religion". Gross superstition was the order of the day. And it was imperative that some one must rise and reform religious life in Egypt.

Ikhnaton's religious revolution

The times of Ikhnaton were quite favourable for a change in religious ideas. Formerly the conception of the power of God Ra was limited to Egypt only. When Egypt grew into an Empire, naturally the power of this God also increased; for wherever Egypt extended, there the power of God Ra-Amon too expanded itself. From this extension of the power of God, Ikhnaton was convinced that there was a certain single energy which controlled the whole Universe or else the new phenomenon could not be intelligently explained. Thus in the mind of Ikhnaton arose a new notion of God—His Oneness. Once again, while looking amid luxury and plenty and having enjoyed the bliss of nature, he came to feel that God could not be something terrifying; on the contrary He was positively a kind and merciful Father, who had afforded all the beautiful phenomena of nature to His creation. Ikhnaton was

absolutely convinced of there being only one God in the world, who was a Kind Creator. Ikhnaton, a confirmed monotheist, thus began to talk of the true God when he came to the throne. According to him "He was intangible, formless, omnipresent Father of mankind, the controller of that remote yet proximate force, which for want of a better definition, was called the life-giving Energy behind the power of the Sun." He was the tender and merciful "Father and Mother of all that He had made," "Lord of Love," "the comforter of them that weep." We begin to realize how Ikhnaton stands as "the first great land-mark in the higher development of the human-brain," when he conceives of God as "a kind of Divine Essence pervading all space." His theory of God is remarkable not only on account of its nobility of conception, but also by reason of its scientific accuracy. Flinders Petrie says that no conception that can be compared with this for scientific accuracy was reached for at least 3000 years after it. "Ikhnaton called upon his followers to search for Him not in the confusion of battle, nor behind the smoke of sacrifices, but amid the every day scenes of Nature and in the heart's happiness." The sunlight being His most obvious manifestation on earth, Sun-worship was an outward aspect of his religion; but Ikhnaton again and again explained that the true God was not the Sun itself but the 'Master of the Sun', the Energy which sustained it and all creation." The foremost law of Ikhnaton's religion was identical with the first Mosaic

Commandment, namely, that no graven image either of the true God or of the Older Gods was to be made or worshipped. Thus Ikhnaton preached his "astonishingly enlightened monotheism," a doctrine of truth and love. The one thing that distinguishes him further is that because he considered God as a kind Father, his form of worship was simple in every aspect and could easily be grasped by every one. He had termed his God, Aton. He stressed the milder and humaner aspects of God and therefore according to him prayers were to be offered at sunrise and sunset only, when the light of the sun is pleasant. Instead of a proud priesthood he had a few well-tried temple-heads who faithfully preached his doctrines. The old sacrifices were replaced by offerings of milk, honey, flowers and the like. Above all the prayers and hymns were so simple and beautiful in their construction—there was hardly any artificiality about them. Ikhnaton had thus succeeded in shearing his religion of all formality—not a "rag of superstition or falsity clinged to the new religion."

Even in his views regarding after-life he was explicit. He felt that after death the soul of man existed in the form of the spirit, sometimes resting in the dreamy halls of heaven and at others visiting the places it prized most while on earth. He did not believe in hell, simply because he could not conceive that God could afford to see His own creatures suffering endless torture, however sinful they might have been.

Ikhnaton's doctrines were entirely of a pacific

nature. He did not believe that "warfare or military domination over other countries was compatible with his creed of universal gentleness and love." There is an Asokan touch about these ideas of the Empire. When the Hittites and other invaders were trying to occupy Syria and Palestine and his governors wrote home for orders, Ikhnaton refused to fight and lost his provinces. Ikhnaton thus sacrificed all his glory and dominion to his ideals.

His pacifism

This young emperor was so full of vision, fearless, strong, and unwisely insistent that he adopted means in forcing his new "imperialism in religion", which has earned for him the title of the Heretic King. In his enthusiasm for Aton-worship he changed his own name to suit it. His original name was Amenhotep, meaning, 'Amon is satisfied'; he changed it into Ikhnaton, meaning 'Profitable to Aton.' He got the Amon-temples closed and drove out the priests. But in spite of this, when he found Amon-worship still alive, he removed his capital from Thebes to a new place which he called Amarna, meaning 'the Horizon of Aton'. And lastly in his zeal he got the names of the old gods, specially Amon, scraped wherever they appeared. But still he could not succeed in putting a stop to the old religion. He died in 1358 B. C. and his religion died with him, as came to be the case with Akbar's Din Illahi.

But because Ikhnaton's religion died with him, it cannot deter us from according him the requisite

meed of praise. It may be that he had gone into excess, it is true that due to his religious dogma the Egyptian Empire suffered heavily, as is borne out by the 300 Amarna letters; but the intrinsic worth of his doctrines remains the same. We wonder the more how Ikhnaton could conceive of such high ideals at so early a date in history, and could easily afford to lose the fruits of all the conquests of his ancestors, when we know that he did all this and died at the premature age of 30 years only. Alas! he was much ahead of the times. "His life plainly shows the impracticability of his doctrines; yet there can be no question that his ideals will hold good till the swan turns black and the crow turns white, till the hills rise up to travel and the deeps rush into the rivers."

MESOPOTAMIA

- THE VALLEY OF THE TWIN RIVERS

Among the earliest and progressive civilizations of the world comes the civilization of Mesopotamia, or the civilization of Valley of the Euphrates and Tigris (names of the rivers), or the civilization of the Valley of Shinar (a Biblical term), or the civilization of the Fertile Crescent (shape of the valley).

This civilization extending from about 4000 B. C. to 540 B. C., affords us an inimitable picture of human life, and it is indeed a pleasure to notice the progress registered by man in the region watered by the two ancient rivers.

Sumerian Civilization

The earliest inhabitants of this valley were the the Sumerians, so called from their original home-land of Sumer. Their most noteworthy contribution was the building of cities, and their highly organised life at so early a date as 3500 B. C. The Sumerians were a very industrious people who made the best use of agricultural and industrial opportunities of the land of their adoption. They built their cities round the artificially erected tower-temple devoted to God ENLIL, the God of the Air, whose temple surmounted the

tower. The houses of the people, made of brick and mortar, stood along the sides of the straight and wide roads, issuing forth in all directions from the centre of the town; and Sumerians towns were fortified. The tower-temple was indeed the beehive of Sumerian activity—at the top was the House of God, at its bottom was the market. In this market were gathered for sale, agricultural commodities, dairy products, wool, metal-wares, dates, pottery and the like. Therein was also situated the city-bank, which was managed by the priests, who gave loans and received interest and capital, all in the name of God. The priest of the tower-temple was not merely the religious head of the town, but he was also the temporal head of the State. Internal peace and external security, agricultural and industrial facilities, dispensation of justice and encouragement to trade and commerce were the principle duties of the ruler, which he admirably put into execution and for which he received due compensation through taxes. Taxation was rather heavy, but there was no revolution by the people, because they were in a prosperous condition and could afford to pay these heavy dues, and they were at the same time conscious that in the warring world of Sumerian times, their rulers were able to afford them sufficient facilities and security of life and property. The Sumerians carried on a flourishing trade with their neighbours from which they were able to derive great profit. For Governmental purposes, and Commercial record, writing was necessary and so the Sumerians

developed their independent method of writing, which reached only the Phonetic Stage, consisting of 350 signs.

Writing

The writing of the Sumerians is called cuneiform writing because they wrote on soft clay-tablets by means of a sharpened reed called the stylus. The signs were impressed into the tablets by the pen and once the writing was finished the tablets were put into the oven and fired, to afford them permanence.

Literature

The Sumerians developed their grammar, pure literature, mathematics, medicine and above all a dictionary of difficult terms. At the same time they also evolved a system of enumeration and weights, the characteristic feature of which was the counting in 60's. They had 60 Shekels equalling a Mina or a pound and 60 Minas equalling a Talent. It is from this method of enumeration that we have started counting time through sixty seconds and sixty minutes. The Sumerians, on account of their internal wars, lost their independence when their land was occupied by the Akkadians, belonging to the Semitic race, under their leader Sargon I, about the year 2750 B. C. The Akkadians were great fighters, though they were not as civilized as the Sumerians, and the net consequence was that physically the Akkadians conquered the Sumarians, but culturally the Sumerians conquered their political masters. The Sumerian-Akkadian Empire extended its sway over the largest territory in this

region as a result of the combination of Sumerian Lance and Shield bearers with the Akkadian Archers. This empire of the Akkadians was acquired by the Amorites by about 2000 B. C. under their leader Hummurabi. The Amorites also belonged to the Semitic race.

Mesopotamia. Hummurabi

Hummurabi stands as a land-mark in the history of Mesopotamia. A great conqueror, a greater administrator, he was the greatest social and legal reformer of the land of his conquest. He successfully swooped down on the Sumerian-Akkadian Empire and added to its extent, so that under him all the land between Persia and the Mediterranean accepted his sovereignty. He divided his empire into convenient units and delegated extensive power to the Governors to enable them to control these units, and at the same time he was a highly vigilent and strict emperor, who controlled the land better than any other ruler the region has known. In order to implement a uniform state policy he summoned the provincial Governors to the capital periodically, particularly on occasions of national festivity like the sheep-shearing festival. Otherwise he issued periodic directions to the Provincial Executive Heads to afford every facility to the population, so that without hitch or hindrance the people might attain unlimited prosperity. At the same time he issued strict orders for the collection of taxes and for affording facilities and safeguarding the life and property of the inhabitants. For example a Governor

was to compensate a citizen in case he had suffered from a burglery and the Governor had not been able to bring the thief to book. He was also responsible for any losses sustained by the people due to laxity in the administration. The letters of Hummurabi are early examples of state documents of a benevolent character. Hummurabi also afforded to his people patronage in industry and commerce, security on the high-ways and an elaborate system of judiciary, which made for honest and prosperous existence. Hummurabi is particularly known for his Code of Laws, which is the earliest, complete, legal system known to man. This code throws a flood of light on the life of the times. The code was inscribed on a stone shaft which now lies in the national museum in Paris. The Hummurabian Code is a combination of both civil and criminal laws, is brief, simple and definite and though it consists of less than 300 articles, is a comprehensive code covering all the major aspects of a highly complex life. There-in occur laws relating to property, inheritance, marriage, divorce and custody of children, the position of merchants, agents, masters and slaves; rights, duties, and wages of workmen, contract laws, banking laws and above all laws governing public conduct. The basis of law was retaliation or the principle of "the tooth for a tooth and the eye for an eye," whose severity was minimised in practice by the pardon of the emperor. The code was particularly strict with regard to petty offences, in order that the people should conduct themselves

well in life. The laws of Hummurabi were also severe in regard to those professions where human life was involved, particularly laws relating to doctors, boatmen, judges, lawyers and witnesses. In regard to public morality the laws of Hummurabi are competant enough to be applied to people even now. However these laws are favourably disposed to orphans, widows and the nobility. Incidentally the Hummurabian code reveals the fact that women enjoyed great social freedom and specialized in the professions of writers and treasurers of the temples. It appears that the dowry system existed in Hummurabian times, though it was legally controlled. It was in Hummurabian times that the Lunar Calendar, as evolved by the Sumerians, was switched on to a Solar condition in the Amorite period of Mesopotamian History by the addition of a month periodically. Hummurabian Letters ordain the addition of a month to the year to make it conform to the Solar Calender. On the whole, in Hummurabian times, the people lead a complex material and spiritual life, and the condition of the people was definitely prosperous. But Hummurabi could not boast of very many great and able successors, and the empire built up round Babylon, of Biblical fame, fell a prey to the ravages of the Assyrians, coming from the northern mountains.

The history of Mesopotamia loses much of its interest after the death of Hummurabi till the Assyrians became the political masters of the Euphrates-Tigris Valley, about the year 732 B. C. The Assyrians

originally lived in the mountainous region north of the valley, and lived by trade in company with the people of Asia Minor. They were, however, traders and raiders by turn and their raiding propensities made of them quite warlike soldiers, who in time to come sought to become great conquerors. But they did not get this opportunity till the great nations of the world of that day had degenerated and deteriorated, and this did not happen earlier than the 8th century B. C., when Egypt, Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria and such other powers had lost their grandeur and prestige and the Assyrian leader Sargon II was able, by his masterful strategy and with the aid of his fine soldiers, to establish an Assyrian Empire in the Valley of the Twin Rivers. The easy success of the Assyrians, under their leaders including Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal, was mainly due to the ruthless character of the Assyrian warriors. Wherever they went the Assyrian soldiers destroyed all that stood opposed to them and invariably left a trail of desolation in the regions against whom they fought. The Assyrian empire was born in and was sustained by brutal might, and as soon as an opportunity arose to bring down the empire, the Assyrian suzerainty came to a premature end. The empire that commenced its career in 732 B. C. ended in 612 B. C. During this period of a century the Assyrians were not merely engaged in conquest, but their leaders also attended to peace-time pastimes. If Sargon II was anxious to build up a

Assyrians

strong army and a stronger arsenal, with several rooms each one of which contained more than 200 tons weight of fighting implements of iron, his great-grand son Ashurbanipal attended to the humane task of building the first Public Library known to man, containing religious, scientific and literary works, making up a total of 22000 tablets of brick. If Sennacherib was anxious to add Egypt to the already extensive Assyrian empire, he was equally anxious, if not more, to create a beautiful capital for that empire, and he succeeded in making Ninevah a magnificient capital adorned with beautiful gardens, and fine palaces. He could also conceive and execute water–works, of the modern type, to feed the mountainous capital with ample water-supply from natural sources, that flowed from it at a great distance. If the Assyrians could destroy the Biblical city of grandeur, the City of Babylon, merely as a matter of retaliation, they were also capable of bringing into mode innovations of the regular arch in architecture and monumental features in their art. The Assyrians were undoubtedly destructive, but they could at the same time boast of a constructive genius. Their exceptionally fine artistic sense evidenced in their fresco-work and their sculptures, as also the erection of engineering works; and at the same time their establishment of stern discipline depict the better side of their existence. But vanity invariably goes before a fall and the Assyrian empire crumbled as suddenly as it was born. The Chaldeans awaited an opportunity to conquer the Fertile

Cresent and they easily succeeded in their enterprise in 612 B. C.

The Chaldeans came from the east and succeeded in snatching political power from the Assyrians with the aid of the Medes of Persia. The Chaldean empire, nearly co-extensive with that of the Assyrians, lasted for another century, after which it disintegrated and the Valley of Shinar ceased to contribute to human civilization and culture after the year 539 B. C. The Chaldean empire is note-worthy on account of the rebuilding of the ancient capital-city of Babylon and the development of Astronomy. The city of Babylon had been destroyed by the Assyrians because the Assyrian home-land had been attacked by the Babylonians; and yet so over-whelming was the tradition of Babylon that the Chaldean Emperor Nebuchadenezzar found it essential to rebuild the ancient capital according to the old plans. After the reconstruction of the city, the ancient capital far surpassed not only its ancient grandeur but everything that the Assyrians had been able to erect in their time. The note-worthy feature of the city of Babylon was the Hanging Gardens that made up one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Chaldean emperors took personal interest in the science of Astronomy, with the result that daily registers were maintained to indicate the positions of the various heavenly bodies and their effects on mankind, and it also became possible to predict astronomical events like the eclipses of the

Chaldeans

sun and the moon. In fact astronomical data was so minutely noted that according to the Chaldean astronomers the solar year lasted for 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes and 41 seconds. Though this duration of the year is not correct according to modern calculations, it all the same denotes the detailed study of the heavenly bodies and their movements which had become possible under the Chaldeans. The two most noteworthy astronomers of the Chaldean period were Nabu Rimannu and Kidinnu, who flourished under the patronage of the emperors. The Chaldeans also regularised the unit of time known as the week. They believed in many gods, but of these seven were the most important, and these seven came to be associated with seven heavenly bodies in the solar system. Each one of these gods came to be worshipped regularly and impartially with the result that each god's turn came only after seven days, and thus a unit of seven days came into existence. Each day came to be named after the planet associated with the particular God and our modern days of the week are but copies of the Chaldean-named days. The Chaldeans were thus great patrons of learning, particularly astronomy and architecture; but unfortunately because of the lack of leadership among them their empire did not last very long and passed on to the Persians.

The history of Mesopotamia amply proves that the river has been a live force in human civilization and culture.

HUMMURABIAN CODE

– THE MOST ANCIENT LEGAL SYSTEM

Law, written or unwritten, is the basis of social life. Each civilized nation has evolved its own code of laws, whereby the relationship between one individual and another is sought to be clarified with regard to a variety of conditions, which arise in the every-day life of the individual. At first sight it may seem that a variety of systems of law prevail in the different nations of the world, one differing from another. But a minute probe into the various codes makes it easy to realise that the basis of all the prevailing systems is the same. The Roman Law has affected all the systems, some to a small extent and others greatly. It can not be denied, for example, that the present systems of Law in France, Germany and Italy owe their origin to the Ancient Roman Law and even the British Law, as also the Legal System of the United States of America, has borrowed much from the same source. But it cannot therefore be concluded that the Roman Code of Laws is the earliest system that the world knows of. We have heard of the Laws of Manu, which are much earlier in date than the Roman Code of Justinian. And yet earlier we have another, the Mesopotamian Code of Laws. It is quite interes-

ting to have a glimpse of this, the earliest Code of Laws known to the world so far.

If we go back to that dim past when man started on his endless quest, the "Conquest of Civilization", and had reached that state when it became imperative for him to have a definite body of laws, the centres of culture were the valleys of the famous rivers of those times. We had the Valley of the Nile, Egypt, the land of the mysterious Sphinx and of the 60 mile range of Pyramids; then came the Valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, Mesopotamia, of Babylonian fame; followed by the Valley of the Indus, the old province of Sind, with its centre at Mohen-jo-daro, the marvel of the 3rd millennium B. C., and lastly, of-course, was the Valley of the Yang-Tse-Kaing and the Hwang-Ho, China, the land of inimitable porcelain wares. There is evidence of some legal system having existed in each of the above centres. But in most cases, for a variety of reasons, the systems have not come down to us. The Indus Valley script is yet to be deciphered, hence the Legal System of ancient Sind has not yet come to light. In the case of Egypt the Code has not survived. The Chinese Code of Laws is rather of a later date than of the other civilized centres. So there remains only one centre of ancient culture whose legal system has survived, namely that of Mesopotamia, and as Spender puts it, "priority in the institution of Law has generally been conceded to the Code of Law promulgated by Hammurabi, King of Babylon".

A Babylonion shaft of diorite has come to light which depicts how King Hammurabi (Circa 2000 B. C.) received his Code of Laws from the Sun God, thus securing for it a Divine Sanction, which is an essential pre-requisite of any scheme, which is to be introduced in any land at so early a date as the 3rd Millennium B. C. Early in his reign Emperor Hummurabi had realized that in order that his people should be able to enjoy even-handed justice, the age-long traditions and customs, the old laws and social conformities be compiled and other laws may also be added to prepare a compendium, determining all social relationships of men. Thus a Code of Laws became a necessity, and such a one the emperor presented to his people, endowed with the divine sanction referred to above. And this code has come to be the most ancient surviving Legal Code of the World.

Hammurabi's Code is 'a combination of Civil and Criminal Law' and has in all 285 sections. From the Code it is evident that the people to whom it was given were greatly concerned with trading and money-making, since the Code provided careful rules for banking on deposit, for the recovery of debts and for distraint on defaulters. Heavy punishments were provided for those, "who neglected to strengthen the parts of banks for which they were responsible". The Code also laid down rules for the holding of landed and other property and its disposal at death. With regard to trade and commerce it is interesting to find,

in this most ancient Legal System, a clarification of the relations of Merchants and Agents, Masters and Slaves, "the rights, duties and wages of different classes of workmen, including gardeners and cultivators", and due penalties provided with regard to the violation of any of the rules establishing the above relationships. With regard to the conduct of individuals, the Mesopotamian System lays down rather rigid rules, specially dealing with "marriage, divorce, the custody of children, the penalties for adultery, and the position of concubines and maid-servants, who have borne children to their masters." The Code, it may be asserted, is quite thorough, in as much as it provides rules for all social relationships from the biggest contract "down to the hiring of boats and the building of houses"; and is "in all these respects almost modern."

Now that we have had a general glimpse of the Code of Hammurabi, it is time to consider the merits and demerits of this Code. The first thing that attracts the reader's attention, while studying this legal system, is the simple and clear statement of the laws. And, there being hardly any ambiguity, it was easier for the Judges to discharge their duties faithfully. The second noticeable feature in this body of laws is the frequency of capital punishment for ordinary offences, to prevent crime, by over-aweing the people. For example, "rape and certain cases of robbery, incest or adultery" were punishable by death.

'Adultery on the part of a husband with another man's wife rendered both the offenders liable to death by drowning, with this proviso that the husband might forgive his errant wife or the king save his servant.' But the severity of penalties can easily be understood when we consider the state of society to which the Code was presented. People had not yet advanced so far as to fully appreciate the responsibilities of life, and when we find how in certain cases even in the modern times as well heavy punishments are necessary to deter the generality of people from committing these offences, it may be said that the Code is not as severe as it may seem to be on a preliminary survey. The principle which is generally adopted in the Code in framing the penalties seems to have been *LEX TALIONIS*, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This principle, as we can see, must have sometimes affected even innocent people, but society had not yet attained that state of evolution as to evolve modern principles of law. The greatest demerit of this Code is that it differentiates men in the eyes of the Law. Rome had rallied round one principle, that every one was equal before the Law, but the Hammurabian Code provides separate penalties for the rich and the poor. The point can best be illustrated by taking an example of a law from the Code. The Code provides, "if a noble-man has shattered a gentleman's limb, he shall pay only one Mina of silver," but in the reverse case the common man would have to pay with his own limb and nothing short. The last but

not the least important feature of the code is the severe penalties that attend the practice of the professions. For example if a surgeon in dealing with a severe wound has "caused a gentleman to die", or to lose his eye, he shall have his hands cut off; again, if a Judge alters a sealed sentence after it has been delivered, he shall have to pay twelve-fold the penalty which was in the sentence and be deprived of his Judgeship. And again, if a builder has built a house and that house has fallen and caused the death of the owner, that builder shall be put to death; and if he has caused the son of the owner to die, his son shall be put to death; and lastly if a boatman or pilot who undertakes to navigate a ship and causes her to be lost or injured, has an unlimited liability for ship and cargo. It may therefore be said that behind the Code of Hammurabi there is "a latent savagery" which must have adversely affected the life of the people. But as Spender puts it, "no doubt it (the severity) was mitigated in practice," by the Emperor exercising the power of the Royal Pardon.

Before we come to a close it would not be out of place to see how justice was carried on in the land. We find each town having a Bench of independent Judges, armed with great powers. Before this the Priests had acted as Judges and had greatly vitiated the ends of justice, but under Hammurabi's rule the Judges were to be non-Priests. Over the Judges of the smallest unit was the Court of Appeal in each Province, the final Court of appeal being provided by

the Emperor himself. From the letters issued by the King to his Provincial Governors, it is evident that the king was rather careful to see that the Law was properly administered.

Thus was the Most Ancient Code of Laws, so far known, promulgated in the ancient valley of Mesopotamia.

MOHEN-JO-DARO

- INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

Till very recently India was considered one of the junior countries, from the point of view of antiquity, in spite of traditions asserting the contrary. But the archaeological excavations, particularly in the valley of the Indus, during the present century, have laid bare a civilization that bears an antiquity to make India contemporaneous with the most ancient and civilized countries of the world, like Egypt and Mesopotamia. And it makes a highly interesting study to look into the most ancient epoch of our ancient civilization.

Name, date, and author ship

This civilization is called the Indus Civilization, because most of the places from where the evidence of this civilization has been found belong to the Indus Valley. It is also called the Harappa Civilization because the ruined town of Harappa was the first in time to yield to the archaeologist the picture of this Indian Civilization. The same civilization is also called the Mohen-jo-daro Civilization because the evidence from the ruined town of Mohen-jo-daro regarding this civilization is more complete than from any other place belonging to this culture. The Indus Civilization has been placed by scholars between 3250 B. C. and

2500 B. C. This date has been assigned to this civilization on the basis of the date of those cities in the west where the articles of Indus Valley manufacture have been found. The writing of the Indus valley people, being yet undefined, has compelled the scholars to fall on this second best method of assigning a date to Indus Civilization. In the cities of Mesopotamia, about whose date scholars are virtually certain, have been found certain articles which do not seem to be the products of the particular cities, but they bear complete resemblance to similar articles, found in great abundance, among Indus Valley sites and hence the date as stated above. This date is only tentative till the writing of the Indus valley has been deciphered and the date determined there-on. The authors of this civilization seem to have been of the Dravidian stock, because the life of the Dravidians in South India resembles in many respects—such as in ornaments, animals, personal cleanliness, religious beliefs, pottery etc.—the life as it is evidenced at Mohen-jo-daro and other Indus Valley Cities. Among the more than sixty places of this civilization, so far known, three are the most important, and of these Harappa is the earliest, Mohen-jo-daro the most fruitful and Chanhu Daro the Industrial Centre of the Indus Civilization.

Town-planning, architecture, water-supply & drainage

The Indus Valley Civilization depicts a harmonious blend of a material and spiritual existence. The Indus Valley people afford evidence of a rich and happy life. The Indus cities offer certain particular aspects of

human civilization which are quite worthy of emulation even now. The Indus people had a keen zest in life. They lived in well-built, commodious and airy tenements, equipped with all other amenities of a modern house. The houses were well-arranged round a court-yard and they speak very highly of the architects of the day. The most imposing edifice uncovered at Mohen-jo-daro was the Great Bath. This impressive structure—a part of a vast Hydropathic Establishment—180 ft. by 108, has in its centre a bathing pool, 39 ft. long 23 ft. broad and 8 ft. deep, with easy methods of supply and disposal of water. The effectively water-proofed bath with its spacious verandahs and galleries and chambers, affords an excellent example of the ancient architects' skill and imagination. As Sir John Marshall remarks, "it remains to be said that for careful and massive construction, with the materials then available the Great Bath could hardly have been improved upon." Not only were the houses well-planned, but even the cities, as a whole, were erected according to solid plans. The city of Mohen-jo-daro is cut up and divided by straight roads and streets running north to south and east to west, affording a clean atmosphere to the city, and making it possible to keep the city in a neat and sanitary condition. It is not only town-planning which attracts the attention of scholars to the Indus Cities, but their system of water-supply and under-ground drainage are other social amenities which make the Indus Civilization unique in the history of man. The

people were supplied with water by public and private wells and the sanitation of the city was maintained through an underground drainage system, complete in every respect, and by the provision of dust-bins at convenient points. The social amenities of water-supply, town-planning and drainage do not merely speak of the high state of civilization attained by the people, but they also denote the emergence of a well advanced and benevolent civic organisation. A detailed study of the Indus Cities goes to show that the civic authority was very well obeyed, as any the slightest deviation from the rules of the city's civic authority is so very rarely in evidence. The people thus lived in properly equipped houses and enjoyed certain civic amenities which many of the modern Indian cities still crave to enjoy.

Personal adornment & ornaments

The Indus people also had been in such a prosperous state that they had sufficient funds to spare for the purposes of personal adornment. Their thriving agriculture and flourishing industry brought a rich harvest to them and their belly-problem was easily solved. Having thus satisfied their prime need, they could afford to make themselves highly presentable specimens of humanity. They developed their textile industry; they mastered the art of embroidery; they utilized the technical skill of the jeweller to produce admirable ornaments, and it had become possible for them to use cosmetics of varied textures for the beautification of the human personality. The varied

articles of personal decoration not only bespeak a prosperous condition of the people, but also a highly evolved aesthetic sense and technical skill of the people. In particular the ornaments of the Indus Valley, including ear-rings, necklaces, bangles, armlets, wristlets, rings, girdles and anklets, made of varied materials, are a sure evidence of a highly developed sense of beauty and appreciation of technical ingenuity possessed by the people of India five thousand years ago.

The people used wheat, barley, fruits, vegetables milk and flesh of animals for their food purposes.

Agriculture, ndustries and commerce

Agriculture in the Indus Valley was in a thriving state and industry had not lagged behind. The textile industry, the jeweller's craft, the manufacture of beads, the productions of the potter and such other enterprises paved the way for extensive commerce, and the Indus Valley people did not fail to utilize the opportunity of exchanging their wares with the rest of the world. Historical evidence goes to show that the Indus Valley people had commercial connections with Crete, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Southern India and far-off China, and their commercial ventures were crowned with success.

The people of the Indus Vally had devised effective ways of utilizing their leisure hours. The children

Games and amusements

made their own clay toys or played with those professionally made, boasting a considerable variety and ingenuity in manufacture. The male-adults were addicts

to games at dice and the female-adults rejoiced in investing their free hours in music and dancing.

Art

The artistic genius of the Indus people can be perceived not only from their ornaments but also from various other articles found from the city-sites of the Indus Valley Civilization. Particularly interesting in this regard are the Indus seals. The execution of animal engraved designs are excellent. Not only are they realistic but they also demonstrate the artist's breadth of vision. The bronze models of the Dancing Girl furnish further proof of the artistic calibre of the Indus Valley inhabitants of 5000 years ago, apart from establishing that dancing was an accomplished art in vogue in India even at that early period. The bronze Dancing Girl adorned with requisite beauty-aids, with hands on her hips and feet apart, beating time and music, is a representative specimen of art for arts sake from the Indus Valley. In addition to all this the beautiful toys of varied types, stationary and with moving limbs, afford additional evidence that art in India even at 3000 B. C. had reached a high and creditable water-mark.

Religion

Along with a keen desire to advance agriculturally and industrially and develop a luxurious and rich earthly existence, the Indus Valley people also attended to their spiritual advancement as well. They came to realize and perceive the existence of the Universal Creator, whom they symbolized in the historic Shiva. With the

proto-type of Shiva was associated the Mother Goddess or the Goddess of Creation, and it seems for a moment that the people of the Indus Valley were developing the idea of the later Hindu Triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. The philosophy of yoga had been understood and practised and symbolic worship had also been evolved. The tree, the snake and the trident came to be worshipped as the symbols of the Great God. Scientifically-correct methods of the disposal of the dead had also been devised.

Government and Society

Such a well ordered and advanced life in the Indus Valley pre-supposes a well-advanced society and a well-ordered Government. Nothing tangible has however been found to apprise us of social life and Government organisation in the Indus Valley. Still certain conclusions can be arrived at in this regard, based on evidence pertaining to other aspects of life. The keenness with which the women-folk resorted to personal adornment in the Indus Valley suggests social freedom for them. There is no evidence suggesting class or caste rigidity in the Indus Valley then. The virtually complete absence of encroachments on public land at the Indus sites suggests benevolent and vigilant administration, well respected by the population. Regarding its structure nothing definite can be asserted, though it appears very likely that the Indus people preferred the city-state administration.

On the whole, the industry, the artistic genius and the keenness of interest in life—material and spiritual—mark the Indus Valley people as the forerunners of modern civilization.

CHINA

– VALLEY OF THE YELLOW RIVER

With the advent of agriculture in the life of man, human communities came to occupy the most fertile regions of the world, particularly the valleys of the great rivers, and early human civilization therefore found an easy vent in the riverine regions of the earth. The Valley of the Nile, the Valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, the Valley of the Indus and no less the Valley of the Yangtze-kiang and the Hwang-Ho have proved to be the bee-hives of cultural activity in the early history of man. But the attention to the contribution of China to human culture and civilization has invariably been retarded by the exceptional inertia from which the Chinese came to suffer in the second millennium A. D. in particular. And yet the sum total of Chinese influence on human life is sufficiently heavy to warrant a useful study. In fact as Professor Hearnshaw points out, 'if we remember what the compass, gun-powder and the printing-press meant to Christiandom in the 15th century A. D. we shall hardly regard it fanciful to say that the Renaissance owed also as much to China as to Greece'. It therefore makes an instructive study to evaluate Chinese contribution to human culture and civilization.

The early history of China is mixed up with legend and it therefore becomes impossible to chronicle the history of China from the earliest times. It is, however, known that the Chinese people started with the Neolithic Age and subsequently entered the Metal Age, and their natural physical conditions made it possible for the Chinese to develop an indigenous culture and civilization, unadulterated by outside influence. Chinese records commence with five kings who are too virtuous to be treated historically. The earliest reliable record on Chinese history goes back to about 2500 B. C., when the Chinese people developed city life, dominated by the ruler. However, China passed on to the Feudal Age, and it was not until the rise of the Shang Dynasty in the middle of the 18th Century B. C. that peace and order were restored and China was unified. The Shang Dynasty unified China and dominated the Valley of the Yangtze-kiang and the Hwang-Ho from about 1750 to 1125 B. C. The political power passed on from the Shang Dynasty to the Chou Dynasty, which continued its suzerainty over China upto 250 B. C. The Chou Dynasty was followed by the Tsin or Chin Dynasty and Chin Dynasty was followed by the Huns. Almost all the contribution to human culture and civilization became possible under the first three dynasties, and later Chinese history is a mere monotonous story of kings and queens, noblemen and commoners, mainly dominated by foreign influences.

Early political chronicle

The Chinese people developed certain ideals of

government. Benevolent autocracy was the best mode of government according to the Chinese. Even the great moral philosopher of China–Confucius–advocated a benevolent monarchy. Among the best known rulers of China may be cited Shih–Huang–Ti, whose personal name was Sheng, the first Universal Emperor of China, as is implied by the name. Shih–Huang–Ti belonged to the Tsin Dynasty which, overthrew the Chou Dynasty in 249 B. C. He assumed the leadership of his clan in 247 B. C. and became the Sovereign Ruler of China in 221 B. C. He died in 210 B. C. During the period of his rule the Huns attacked China from the north-west, but Shih-Huang-Ti with his well organised army routed them several times and stopped external aggression. It, however, occured to him that the only permanent way to keep off the invader on the-land side was to fortify the land-frontier and provide for permanent vigilance. He therefore was responsible for conceiving the idea of the Great Wall of China and for its able execution. The Great Wall of China is 1800 miles long, 22 feet high and 20 feet broad. It boasts of a watch-tower, 40 feet high, after about every 200 yards. It consists of two ramparts of solid structure of burnt bricks, resting upon granite foundation. The space within is filled with stones and earth. It starts from the sea-shore where the Manchurian and Chinese borders meet, east of the city of Peking, and extends west-wards merging itself into the Desert of Gobi. It stretches like a long

Shih-Huang-Ti

writhing reptile which has for long kept off the invader from that direction. This measure, which should have made the emperor popular, actually became an item of popular hate against Royalty, because the emperor had utiltized convict-labour without any remuneration for work done. Free-men or convicts, the Chinese people believed, must be paid for their work. Shih-Huang-Ti is also responsible for renaissance in Chinese Literature. For all practical purposes Chinese Literature effectively commenced its career with him. The Chinese people boasted of an ancient literature prior to the time of the First Universal Emperor, but most of it disappeared on account of the monstrosity of Shih-Huang-Ti. Ill-advised by his ministers he ordered all ancient literature to be destroyed. Shih-Huang-Ti committed a blunder of the highest magnitude in order that his personal vanity of being the originator of Chinese Literature may be satisfied. It cannot, however, be denied that the endeavour he put forth in the creation of new literature entitles him to a great place in history. In both his enterprises instead of winning praise from the populace he earned an obloquy because of the rough means he utilised to attain the venerable objects. Still the conceptions of Shih-Huang-Ti were grand and his efforts personally honest, which entitle him to a high place among the well-known rulers of all ages.

The Chinese people are particularly known to the world on account of some of their inimitable products.

Very early in their history right from the Shang times, the Chinese specialized in the manufature of bronze and copper vessels of a distinctive style. The Chinese vases and bowls, with embossed designs, have attained well merited distinction among all the civilized nations, and even at the present day find an easily lucrative market throughout the world. The Chinese soil makes the sustenence of the silk-worm an easy pastime, and, China since ancient times has been the producer of silk-textiles of an inimitable character. Soft to the touch, and heavy in texture, their durability created for them a permanent market in the world. The Chinese porcelain-wares are also inimitable goods, and they have immortalized the name of the country of their origin, by their distinctive style and manufacture. Porcelain-wares from any part of the world by their name, China-ware, point to China, the first producer of the commodity. Thus porcelain-wares, silks, and metal articles created a reasonably extensive commercial opportunity for the Chinese people, to take to the exporting trade. They therefore developed, quite early in their history, a lucrative commerce.

Chinese Industries

For commercial and other purposes the Chinese needed the aid of writing and reached the phonetic stage. Beyond that they could not progress and have not progressed even by now. The Chinese phonetic writing has peculiarities of its own, which have made it very complicated and have prevented a popular use of it. As such it

Inventions and discoveries

gave rise to a special class of writers, known as the Mandarins, and the vocation afforded to the professional-writers great prospects. They acquired high political offices and sometimes attained the political sovereignty of some regions also. The Chinese originally wrote on thin slips of wood, with bamboo pencils frayed at one end to take up the coloured liquid. Later they used silk-paper, but finding silk very valuable developed the modern linen-paper, produced from barks of trees, rags etc. The Chinese were the first people to use modern paper as also the modern type of ink. Incidentally in their endeavour to make writing yield the maximum results, the Chinese people stumbled on the Printing Press early in the 10th Century of the Christian era. Their press was not of movable types as the modern printing press is. Its types were immovable, yet the Chinese invention of the Printing Press was as useful to the human race, as the vehicle for the exchange of human ideas, as it has proved to be now. The Chinese also developed early the use of gun-powder in the 17th century A. D. They also invented the Mariner's Compass. The modern world, in peace or at war, finds the Mariner's Compass, Gun powder and the Printing Press of paramount importance, and the discovery and invention of these three things alone entitles the Chinese people to a great place in human history. The Chinese were long devoted to Mechanics and Engineering, and the proof of their remarkable progress is to be found in their arched bridges and gate-ways, water-ways and irrigational

appliances, as also in the 650 miles long Grand Canal, extending from Hang Chow in the south, to Tienstein in the north. The Chinese were also the first people to use coal-gas for heating purposes, long before it dawned on the Western Man to utilise this new process. The wall-paper, the Camel's hair brush and the art of the sculptor acquired an important place in the life of the Chinese people quite early, and it was after centuries of time that the rest of the world became conversant with the use of these inventions.

Religion

The Chinese, from very early times, developed a simple faith. Their beliefs were simple and their ideals were noble. They believed in the ideal of the golden mean or the ideal of non-extremism and contentment. They struck the golden mean between the other worldliness of Asiatic countries, like India, and gross materialism of the western countries. They led a life of compromise. They believed 'in enjoying what you have and strive for more'. But an attempt to have more was soon forgotten and, like the old lotus-eaters, they remained a contented and un-ambitious people, who lost touch with progress. And centuries of inertia made the Chinese people lead a backward life, while the world was marching ahead at full speed. The Chinese religion was a religion of commonsense. They believed in Ancestor-Worship and therefore maintained a Hall of Ancestors, where each dead ancestor was assigned a wooden tablet, and

incense was burnt in the Hall to pay homage to them. It was this worship of the ancestors which made the Chinese people rever their kings. The father was the head of the family, therefore he must be respected; the king was the ancestor of the country, and therefore, likewise, he must be revered. In this wise reverence and respect for a supreme power controlling the universe was also evolved. At best God was the creator of the universe, a practical or moral entity, rewarding good and punishing evil.

Lao-Tze

The Chinese people and their life have been dominated by the philosophies of three individual leaders—Lao-Tze, Confucius and Gautama Buddha. Lao-Tze, which means the old philosopher, (604 517 B. C.) was the senior-most philosopher of China, who gave rise to Taoism or the religion of the Right path. Lao-Tze's real name was Li-Erh. He was born in Honan in Central China. He is said to have been a man of humble origins, who by the dint of his personal ability became the keeper of the State Archives of the Chou Dynasty at Lo-Yang. He was a speculative thinker who believed in the stoic idea of self-effacement. To him it appeared that the best way of success was the suppression of desire, which could be easily achieved by escape from the world, back to nature. He preached a stoical ideal—he was opposed to the pleasures of the world and advocated a return to the simple life of the past. He believed in the regeneration of the soul through personal persecution of the self. His was the philosophy

of renunciation, the philosophy of detachment from the world. His philosophy is fully developed in his book going by the name of Tao-Teh-King, which is said to be his own composition. Slightly later than Lao-Tze came Confucius, Kong-Fu-Tze Master Kong, the moral philosopher of China. He was born about the year 551 B. C. in the province of Shantung. He too like the old philosopher was born in a family of humble circumstances, and quite early in his life had to support a large personal family. He took up the vocation of the teacher at the age of 25 and celeberated his silver jubilee in the profession before entering pastures new. Confucius, Kong-Foo-Tze, was a moral teacher. He typifies a gentleman. His teachings are a systematization of old beliefs and customs. He emphasises a virtuous life to make it enjoyable. Filial piety, ancestral devotion and propriety of conduct are the main teachings of this Master. Strict self-discipline was the ideal to which he gave a permanent form in Chinese life. He advocated the great ideal of life, "You must not do unto others what you would not like to be done unto you". He was the master of etiquette and his books known as "The Classics", six in number, prescribe human conduct for every conceivable occasion. They are an encyclopaedia, containing legend and history, poetry and wisdom, of past ages. At the ripe age of 51 this moral preacher of China undertook to carry out a benevolent reform in the administration.

Confucius

On account of his honesty of purpose he was appointed the governor of a town in the Duchy of Lu, a part of modern Shantung province. He was eminently successful and was gradually promoted to the Ministership of Justice in the same Duchy. He is said to have almost completely banished crime from that State. He, however, resigned from his office since he did not acquire the support he wanted from the Duke. And he took to travelling with the intention of reforming the administration, by ending internal wars and ushering-in an era of peace in China. He was very well received at the various Courts, but the selfish desires of the individual rulers made his ideal of Universal Benevolent Monarchy in China, unsuccessful. He died at the ripe old age of 72. Whereas Lao-Tze suggested a renunciation from the world as the solution to the problem of the human soul, Confucius advocated a moral aloofness from the world. He did not suggest running away from the world as the solution of the human problem, because he believed that if one ran away from the world, the world might still run after him. Confucius, however, remained a mere moral philosopher, whereas Lao-Tze came to be deified. Confucian philosophy suffered a great set-back under Shih-Huang-Ti, who was the follower of Lao-Tze. The Chinese people had originally developed a great reverence and respect for womenfolk. It was later on that women came to occupy a backward status in Chinese society, when Confucious came to their rescue and advocated

equality of men and women. According to him man and woman were equal parts of society, but woman was considered the lesser half. This equality of women, though they were the lesser half, with men as advocated by Confucius was psychologically devised, and it afforded an important place to women in the history of China. Eventually, however, the suggestion of Confucius, that women were the lesser half, reduced women to straits and it was only under the modern Chinese philosopher Dr. Sun Yat Sen that women have come into their own in China and have made their due contribution in the liberation of their home-land from the yoke of the Japanese and in the evolution of a communistic political domination.

The Chinese people, therefore, through their ideal of the enjoyment of life, their moral philosophy and their inventions and discoveries, have indeed contributed a great deal to human civilization and culture.

THE PHOENICIANS AND THE JEWS

Among the enterprising peoples of ancient times are reckoned the Phoenicians and the Jews. Their adventures and endeavours in their respective fields of activity have yielded results of a permanent and considerable value. Perseverence was their watch-word and its prudent practice brought in its train well-merited and abundant reward. Both have made their mark on human civilization. The Phoenicians came to be the earliest western commercial enterprisers, who by their mercantile activity established the most powerful maritime empire along the Mediterranean, the envy of all growing European powers. They became the carriers of commerce and culture from ancient and efficient shores to the growing babes of Europe, anxious to acquire the benefits of life. The Phoenicians became the disseminators of Egyptian and Mesopotamian culture. The Jews developed a religious philosophy that gave birth to Christianity, the salvation and succour of uncounted millions today. A brief survey of the career of these two people inspires confidence and arouses ambition among the meekest of mankind.

As soon as man had tasted the fruits of a settled life, a regular hunt was organised by human communities to habilitate those areas of the mother earth

which afforded the ordinary amenities of life, particularly abundant food, easily. It was on this account that the valleys of the great rivers came to be occupied by man quite early, and these settlements became the cradles of human civilization and culture. Even after the various valleys had been occupied, there still remained human communities, who were in search of more fertile areas than the regions they occupied. The grassy belts to the north and south of the Indo-Gangetic and Tigris-Euphrates Valleys sent out adventurous spirits among them to find pastures new, and ultimately the migrants of the grassy belts of the equatorial region spread themselves in an imposing line along the two coasts of the Mediterranean—the Indo-Europeans inhabiting the north coast and the Semites the southern shores of this in-land sea. And to these people of the Semitic race belong the Phoenicians and the Jews.

Phoenician origin & race

The Phoenicians like the Jews belong to the Semitic branch of the Southern Caucasian Race. They were nomads in search of a new home, and their adventurous enterprise lured them from southern Arabia to the northern Syria. The rovings of the Semitic pastoral folk of the Arabian Desert commenced shortly after 3000 B. C. and before the 1st half of the 2nd Millennium had run out they were well-settled in the pleasant land of Syria, later known to the Greeks as Phoenicia, or the 'Land of Palms', "shortly after the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt."

The Mediterranean home of the Semites—the Phoenicians and the Jews—extended for nearly 400 miles along the sea. But the land of their adoption was greatly narrowed by the barren desert to the east.

The land

Syria, the Phoenician home, was thus hardly 85 to 100 miles wide at any point. At its north stood the nearly parallel mountain-ranges, the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon, enclosing amid them a fertile valley watered by the Litani. The Lebanons were by themselves a valuable source of wealth by virtue of their being covered with rich cedar-wood forests. The uplands of Syria afforded rich pasturage and the lower plains provided excellent agricultural land. In spite of the northern coast being shut off from the back-country by the mountains, the land of the Phoenicians was indented by natural harbours. Thus, however narrow the land might have been, the Phoenicians had cast their lot on a region that was well endowed by nature. Not only was it naturally fit to support a good population, but its geographical situation afforded it an added importance, which the people were not slow in realizing. The Syrian coast was the converging point of the water-routes to Egypt, Cyprus and the Aegean basin, as its hinterland provided the meeting-ground for the land-routes from Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and the lands farther east. From a political stand-point also the Phoenicians were fortunate. Syria was under the formal tutelage of Egypt, and under the shadow of the Pharoahs of the Nile Valley

the Phoenicians acquired the industrial arts and trading habits, which went a great way in making them great. Politically Syria stood to gain as soon as the great powers of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete and Asia Minor showed signs of disintegration, because of its central situation, and the Phoenicians made the best of their opportunity in building up a colonial empire on the ashes of the old veterans, having by then grown healthy and strong, under the aegis of the suzerain power, with extensive foreign connections. From a cultural stand-point as well, the centralised situation of Syria made the Phoenicians thrive. "Phoenicians came to feel constantly the cultural influences of both Egypt and Mesopotamia." They assimilated the cultural attributes of the various civilized lands they visited on account of their mercantile activities, and out of it, with their individualistic vigour and initiative they were able to evolve new cultural standards and innovations in the life of man.

In the early stage of their career the Phoenicians seem to have shown no particular sign of their future enterprise when they settled down to eke out their existence, as best as they could, in the land of their occupation. Those gaunt black-bearded men, familiar figures in Egyptian art, later called the Phoenicians (i. e. Red Skins) by the Greeks, were roused into lucretive activity by the Egyptians. Treeless Egypt needed timber urgently and always, and in in quantity, and the search for it brought them to Syria. The early Egyptian Colony at Byblos in Syria,

for supplying 'home' with cedar-wood, awakened the inhabitants to a new activity. The Phoenicians took to the sea with a fresh approach, which reaped them unanticipated harvests. The Phoenicians became the Carriers of Commerce. They commenced their commercial enterprise with supplying Egypt with timber and ended with being the controllers of the greatest maritime empire of the ancient world.

Phoenicians as carriers of commerce

The heavily indented coast of Syria, or Phoenicia as it came to be called, made of its inhabitants fine sailors, who were introduced to extensive commerce by their Imperial Masters of the Nile. As Ralph Turner puts it, "indeed, their (Phoenician) prosperity was based largely on the opportunity the Egyptian Empire gave for an extended commerce." The Phoenicians, greatly bucked up by the new prosperity, began venturing in the eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean and the Black Sea waters, standing well in competition with the born sailors and traders of Minoan Crete. Minoan Civilization however suffered a set-back and soon declined, and the Phoenicians followed on their heels and became the controllers of the commerce of this region. As the successors to Minoan commerce the Phoenicians were introduced to a veritable mine of wealth, since they became the sole suppliers of the needs of the backward people inhabiting the extensive north coast of the Mediterranean. Egypt also followed suit to Crete and the Phoenicians were the first to be free from the Imperial yoke. They now became more

venture-some, and their commercial cupidity made them reconnoitre uncharted regions, till they established trading connections all along the Mediterranean and as far north as England and as far down as the west coast of Africa. Some of these maritime expeditions occupied them for years together. The Phoenicians are credited with having gone round the African continent, starting from the Gulf of the Suez: and this adventure took them three years to complete, for they grew their own food, particularly wheat, on the African soil, at the appropriate season. They are also said to have established commercial connections with Ceylon and India. In fact there came a time, commencing towards the close of the 2nd Millennium B. C., when the Phoenicians became indispensable to the Mediterranean world and they were invariably most welcome at every port of call. This came to be so since 'they offered to every country something it did not possess.'

All this great maritime commerce became possible through the already existing ports in Greece and the Grecian Archipelago and on the marshy shores of the Black Sea. and the new trading stations the Phoenicians studded the Mediterranean and other regions with. Magnificently situated for business, the great harbours of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Gebel, Berytus, and Arvad became the bee-hives of their activity at home, as Palermo, Syracuse, Carthage, Maloga, Cadiz and Marseille became in the Western Mediterranean and Cassiterides (Scilly Isles) or 'tin islands' off Cornwall in England; and when necessity so required,

garrisons were also established by them at Malta, Sicily and Corsica.

Their Industries

Intelligent and hard-working as the Phoenicians were, they soon realized that they could secure a more permanent prosperity not through being mere carriers of commerce, but through their own industries. Accordingly they applied themselves to studying the main industries of the lands of their call, and their excellent crafts-men and men of industry, built up fine industries at home. Crimson has always been the fashionable colour in the east and the Phoenicians specialised in developing a Crimson dye out of the fluid contained in the small sac behind the head of the Murex and another fish of the shell-fish species. The fluid when prepared and applied to cloth with a small iron tool and exposed to sun-light, showed in turn green, blue, red, purple and finally, on a thorough wash, a bright crimson. They also became experts in the manufacture of fine painted glass and produced all manner of objects like bowls, cups, vases, bottles, etc. They became skill-ful weavers and manufactured excellent textiles—woollens, silks, linens, embroideries and all. A search for precious metals made the Phoenicians expert miners, and their skilled craftsmanship in bronze, silver, and gold made them famous throughout the world. The Phoenicians also acquired considerable proficiency in cutting gems, carving ivory and producing shapely furniture and stone sculpture. The Phoenicians exported cedar-wood of the Lebanon forests and

varied industrial products like glass, enamelled vases, jewellery, metal-wares, the crimson dye, woollen cloths, linen and needle work. And in return they secured raw-materials, metals and slaves. 'They seem to have organised the first wide-spread trade in slaves.'

Government and Colonies

The Phoenicians developed their extensive commerce under city-kingdoms, ruled by mercantile oligarchies. Their towns were very well fortified and 'an unsurpassed navy,' protected them at sea. Under Assyrian pressure, the Phoenicians took to colonisation and localised themselves in the western Mediterranean, round the most renowned of their colonies, Carthage, founded in 800 B. C., which soon became 'a military power extending its, sway over north Africa, Sicily, Sardinia and Spain. Here too they kept up their industrial and commercial activity and even the Persian Emperor Darius treated them with kindness and organised a great Phoenician Fleet. The Phoenician power was finally challenged by the Romans and the three Punic Wars (264-146 B. C.) and the exploits of Hannibal there-in, depict the vitality of the Phoenicians. It was through unfair means that Carthage, the central Phoenician colony, was razed to the ground by the Romans and thus ended Phoenician commercial enterprise.

The hectic Phoenician commercial activity yielded two distinct results, apart from the profit of trade that accrued to them. For creating and satisfying

the commercial needs of the various regions the Phoenician visited, he stimulated industrial activity not only in his own homeland, but also in the various other parts of the world. As Winwood Read ably puts it: "they brought to the satiated Indian Prince the luscious and highly sweet wines of Syria, and the Grecian Isles goblets of exquisitely painted glass. From the amber resin gatherers of the Baltic mud to the nutmeg spices growers of the equatorial groves, from the mulberry plantations of the celestial Empire to the tin mines of Cornwall and silver mines of Spain, emulation was excited, new wants were created, whole nations were stimulated to industry by means of the Phoenicians". The other and the most creditable contribution of the Phoenicians was the familiarization of Alphahetic writing in Asia and Europe. Their heavy commercial transactions necessitated the maintenance of record. They therefore adopted the cumbersome cuneiform writing of the Fertile Crescent. They however became conversant with the Egyptian Hieretic writing—conventionalised and simplified Hieroglyphic—through the workers in the quarries of the Sinai peninsula, soon after 1300 B. C., and finding it more suitable and convenient adapted it to their own use, borrowing just 22 signs, representing all consonants, but novowels. The Phoenicians were the first to arrange the signs in a fixed and convenient order to make them easily learned. The selected signs were called by

Stimulated Industrial Activity

The Alphabet

the names of objects they were supposed to resemble: Aleph (ox), Beth (House), Gimel (Camel) etc. From the names of the first two letters is derived the word 'Alphabet'. The Phoenicians also borrowed the direction of writing and the writing-materials, from the Egyptians. Since the Egyptian Hieretic-writing was evolved from the Hieroglyphic, meaning the Sacred Carving, the normal direction of carving, right to left, was the direction of Egyptian writing. This, the Phoenicians also followed, and accordingly this became the normal practice with the Hebrew and Arabic writings, which are derived from it. The Phoenicians used the Egyptian papyrus, pen and ink, and the Greeks also followed suit, as they did in the case of the Alphabet, and called papyrus, Byblos,—hence biblion or bible = Book—since they obtained the article from the Phoenician port of that name. The Armaeans of north Syria picked up the Phoenician Alphabet and made it the international language of the Levant, successfully supplanting the cuneiform and the Hieroglphic, and that was the language Jesus spoke.

Jewish origin and race

The Jews, like the Phoenicians, belonged to the Semitic race and Palestine became their new home, after they had left Arabia in search of a better habitation and had tried their luck in Mesopotamia and Egypt. This was done round about the 13th century before Christ. The Jews, or Hebrews as they were called early in their day, remained tribal in their character, and even in their new home had a

chequered political career. Palestine, the Hebrew home, stood mid-way between the great powers of those ancient days,—Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor—and it invariably suffered the yoke of foreign domination. The war-like Philistines, living in the S.W. of Palestine effectively opposed Hebrew unification for some time. For only a brief period, during the 9th century B. C., did the Hebrews establish an independent kingdom under David and Solomon, to be torn asunder due to internal strife, into the two states of Israel and Judah, to be easily reduced by the Assyrians (722-Israel), and Chaldeans (Judah 586), Greeks and Romans in turn, ending in the permanent Hebrew exile.

The land

The new home of the Hebrews was less fortunately situated than the Phoenician home. Less than 10,000 square miles in area, Palestine has a nearly harbourless coast, a hilly contour, insufficient rain-fall and no plentiful prospect. North Palestine, subsequently Israel, was better situated to thrive by commerce than southern Palestine, which could at best afford scanty vegetation and habilitate some pastoral people. The Hebrews therefore never attained to any great material prosperity and even from the economic stand-point the 9th century B. C. was their best period, when under Solomon particularly they could boast of some real prosperity. On account of the bleak political and geographic situation the Hebrews never attained any great heights in material

civilization, they remained satisfied with considerable borrowings from their neighbours, but they could and did contribute a great deal in the realms of culture. They evolved the personality and philosophy of a Universal Creator and Lord of all creation. In addition their political sufferings, supported by religious affinities, created the idea of a new human association, such a prized idea at present—the idea of Nation-hood.

Nationhood

The political career of the Hebrews, combined with their religious beliefs, fostered the spirit of nation-hood among them. They were able to emerge from a purely tribal stage to the stage of "a people," who possessed certain bonds that made them "a people", whose non-allegiance deprived the individuals of their right of being Hebrews, instead of in any way endangering the solidarity of Hebrew nationhood. Their nomadic rovings from their original home in search of a better and more congenial place, along the fringes of the Fertile Crescent, in Egypt and in North Palestine, as immigrant settlers and the hard life they had to fare, had greatly shaken them, till they were roused to march into Palestine as invaders, under the banner of Jehovah, the protecting deity, who had been announced by their national hero, Moses. The success they won as against the Canaanites, the original inhabitants of the land, possessed of a much superior civilization, instilled a new feeling among the Hebrews—the feeling of unity,

not merely on account of unity of political enterprise, or unity of race and descent, or even a linguistic unity, but the faith that their God Jehovah had found them worthy of a home and had secured one for them and that therefore they were his chosen, 'peculiar people', whose culture, whatever it may mean, was their own, and which made them distinct, and incidentally superior, to others of human-kind. Their exile and enslavement by the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans, the Greeks and the Romans, instead of breaking up the solidarity of their nation-hood, further solidified their feeling of national exclusiveness, and their subsequent career right upto the present, in spite of the severest buffets they have faced till they have now rehabilitated themselves in the country of their adoption, is not only the first, but also the most solid example furnished by human history, of the idea of nation-hood, incidentally depicting the fineness of feeling and the attendant dangers and disasters of the narrow-ness of that feeling.

Contribution to religious thought

In the religious sphere the Hebrews evolved, and that very systematically, their idea of a Universal God and the bond that subsists between man and God. Prior to their advent in Palestine, the Hebrews, like all primitive, pastoral people, explained 'all phenomena by the direct action of super-human and invisible persons and powers, resembling the human spirit' and accordingly believed in many gods, with varied associations, traditions and powers.

It was more superstition than a rational religion as such. However with their settlement in Palestine there dawned a new Hebrew religion. Their political success was assigned to their national God, Yehweh or the Germanic Jehovah, originally the storm-god of the desert of Southern Arabia, who had on Hebrew migration found his adherents localised around the oasis of Kadesh, south of Palestine, till he was recognised as the redeemer of the southern confederacy of the Hebrews. In the time of Moses, Jehovah was a tribal war god of the Hebrews, his 'chosen people', whom he had secured 'the promised land', on condition that they shall lead a righteous life, implying the curbing of animal instincts and leading a virtuous life. 'Righteousness came to signify obedience to the will of a personal God as expressed in the Mosaic system of laws'. "Thus Judaism was placed on a sound ethical basis, making it a morality religion, rather than redemptive." There is no strict monotheism preached by Moses. Jehovah was the exclusive god of the Hebrews—the idea was left as that—is was not developed to its logical conclusion then, and therefore Jehovah was a moral, national, war-god of the Hebrews. On account of this non-monotheistic faith of the early Hebrews, Solomon, the wise, thought it wise to erect temples to Moloch and Chemos in addition to Jehovah, and there was also considerable Baal worship in Palestine. It was however realised by the Prophet Elijah that Jehovah was the

Moses and Jehovah

only true God all else being false, and he preached the same; but the idea of the Universal Lord was not caught by the Hebrews till Prophet Isaiah stressed it specifically, being enmeshed by the more important purpose of Elijahic preaching of a high moral life.

In spite of the stress on righteous life by Moses, men had fallen on evil days, particularly in North Palestine, in the company of Baal and Foreign-god-worshipping Canaanites. The rich merchants and powerful nobles had usurped the rights and properties of the common men by unfair means, typified by King Ahab's murder of Naboth, to own his vine-yard. These ways of the rich and the powerful went against the tribal conception of Democracy and the right. Prophet Elijah reprimanded King Ahab for his action, and put the blame incidentally on the worship of foreign gods and the use of legal practices subsisting in Ahab's dominions. Elijah therefore furthered moral and religious concepts in Palestine. Jehovah was raised to the pedestal of the only God, though this aspect was not caught and accepted by the Hebrews. The moral bond between Jehovah and the Hebrews was not only re-affirmed, but distinctly amplified. But Jehovah retained the fierce war-like attributes of old; the humaner aspects of the God-head had not yet emerged. And hence the murder of Ahab and his family was justified as the just consequence

Elijah

of an immoral act, the sins of fathers visiting their children.

During the century succeeding Elijah, corruption and cruelty, luxury and ritualism went on apace, making life most miserable. Social injustice was the order of the day, and Palestine stood threatened by foreign aggression. The teachings of the early prophets, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha and others seemed to have gone in vain. There, however, arose men among the Hebrews who could read the signs of the times. The Hebrew Prophets of the 8th century read the present and forecast the future, thus asserting their prophet-hood. For "the 'true' prophets were primarily those whose minds were open to the historical experience from which they could deduce the will of God;" since the Hebrews 'found the chief manifestation of the Divine Will in the experience of the social process, not in the experience of physical nature', giving 'history, religious meaning, not only as tradition, but also in the living present'. They came to believe that whatever happened at any time had significance in the terms of Jehovah's purposes.

Amos

Prophet Amos of Tekoa and others of the 8th century before Christ, were therefore confronted mainly with the problems of social inequality and extreme ritualism, and distinctly foresaw the purpose of foreign aggression, if the will of God Jehovah was to prevail. The bond between the people and their deity was the bond of righteousness. Luxury had

made men forget the true meaning of the bond, and had made them seek refuge in the slender thread of feast and ceremony— over-looking human conduct as a thing of any effective consequence. When extreme wealth subsisted side by side with extreme poverty, when prosperity generated arrogance towards one's own kith and kin, less fortunately situated; when the rich were wallowing in wealth and luxury, and the poor were scandalously oppressed, it was evident that society had acquired an unsound basis, and to the Hebrews something against the will of God. And yet God's will was to prevail and the un-righteous could be brought back to the right path only through a proper retribution for their conduct. God Jehovah even according to Elijah punished the wrong and rewarded the right, and this idea was amplified and examplified by Amos, by predicting the fall of Northern Palestine or Israel, at the hands of Assyria; for the Israelites were particularly wicked and believed in foreign gods also. Incidentally Amos had furthered the idea of Jehovah being the Universal God, as suggested by Elijah. Or how else could he justify his prediction of the Assyrian conquest of Israel—foreigners with gods of their own subjugating the Lord's 'chosen people'. Apart from this strict Monotheism, Amos advocated 'righteous living' as against ritualism. He believed that God did not delight in formal religiosity, feasting and sacrifices; he rather rejoiced in right conduct and justice. Amos therefore proved to be a great social reformer and a

sworn enemy of priestly sacrificialism. God Jehovah, under Amos and his immediate successers, was raised to the higher pedestal of a Universal Lord, but continued to be the God of righteousness, who judged men and nations by their conduct and thus determine their future.

Assyria did conquer Israel in 722 B. C. and some 27,000 persons were deported. The Amosean prophecy was thus fulfilled. And now if Judah, the remnant of the Hebrew Kingdom, would not mend its ways, the same or worse fate might over-whelm it too. This warning was served by Isaiah, who re-affirmed all that Amos had advocated. He, however, instilled a new hope among "the chosen people" that though they shall suffer for their wrongs, that suffering and penitence entitled them to freedom and greatness. Strict Monotheism was adhered to, but the retributive quality of the Universal Lord of Righteousness was substituted by one of mercy, in the case of the truly penitent, by the promise of a Messiah, who shall establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Isaiah

Because the Hebrews did not heed what Isaiah had asserted, the Chaldeans conquered Judah in 586 B. C. and fulfilled his prophecies. But the Chaldean conqueror not only took the Hebrews into exile at Babylon, but he had succeeded in destroying the very House of God. The Hebrews were greatly shaken at this, but they were soon reassured by Prophet

Jeremiah and others that the true God did not, like mortals, need a house of stone and mortar; he resided in the human heart instead, and if they retained their faith, their redemption was near at hand.

The Persians, under Cyrus, released the Jews from bondage in 537 B. C. as promised by the prophets. But this exile had done the Jews a lot of good. It strengthened their unity through adversity, it confirmed the Universality of Jehovah,—he could not leave 'his people', but be with them, and hence he was the Lord of the land of the Chaldeans and the rest of the world—and above all it suggested the compilation of prophetic and other religious literature. Thus was born the Old Testament of the Bible, one of the rarest literary works, which most men prize most. Nation-hood was once again revived among the Jews by Ezra and Nehemiah, by the erection of the Theocratic Jewish State, but it came to be priest-ridden, to be redeemed by Jesus Christ, the Promised Prophet. Jesus reclaimed the Lord with the same attributes as had been affirmed by those before him, laying particular emphasis on righteous conduct, mercy and humanity. The Kingdom of God that he came to establish was the moral kingdom, to which the righteous alone were admitted. His kinsmen understood him not, being doped by priestly preaching and Imperial godliness, and he had to pay with his life so that the rest may be saved. His teachgsin are an extension of those of the Jewish Prophets and afford the culmination of the

Christ

idea of the morality religion, affording finishing touches to the prophet-developed "Righteous living", and the Lord of the Righteous. The religion of Christ is a belief in the Father-hood of God and the Brother-hood of Man— stressing humanity and brotherliness among men, and guaranteeing redemption as a consequence of conscious penitent suffering.

The Hebrews, being for considerable centuries a pastoral people, developed music forms of their own, and a style of writing, which has made the Bible unique as a piece of Literary Writing.

The Jews and the Phoenicians, belonging to an identical racial stock, with an identical object of search, developed varying standards of culture and civilization, under varying opportunities. Their career demonstrates that every virile people, given an opportunity, are bound to make their mark in human history.

PERSIAN CIVILIZATION

The history of Persia, prior to the conquest of the country by Alexander of Macedon in 328 B. C., is a chronicle of peculiar interest. It demonstrates the vitality that can be generated in a people by a man of righteousness. A man of truth, the history of Persia proves, can so mould and organise a nation as to lead the world. The early history of Persia is dominated by the Prophet Zoroaster, who provided the requisite leadership and driving force to make Persia one of the foremost contemporary countries of the world.

Early History

The valley of Persia was occupied by the Medes, who settled in its western parts. These Medes are the earliest settlers and belong to the Indo-European stock. The Medes were robust men and expert riders, and lived in tribes. They came in conflict with the Assyrians quite early in their career. They roused Sargon II and Nebuchadnezzar, who were compelled by circumstance to send expeditionery forces against them. The Medes were responsible for the overthrow of the Assyrian power in Mesopotamia, when they joined hands with the Chaldeans, to establish the Chaldean Empire in 612 B. C. The

second batch of settlers who came much later in the day occupied the north and north-east portion of Persia, with the Mountain of Zagros as their central point. These Persians lived in tribes and had evolved the institution of the tribal lord, to lead them in battle. They boasted of polytheistic religion. They professed their faith in gods and goddesses in Nature. Their religion was highly ritualistic and in their ceremonies the Homa juice played an important part. Thus the true religion of a higher and pure life was smothered in the coils of mere ritualism, and Persia lay politically an easy prey to foreign domination. Persia not only lacked political solidarity and religious unity, but it was also deficient in its social organisation. Morality was at a particularly low ebb, and it seemed for a moment that the fair land of Persia would soon attain its doomsday. But it appears that Providence had singled out Persia as the land on which she was to shower her bounty in the 6th century prior to the Christian era. Among the Persians was born Prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathushtra as he is commonly called, in 570 B. C. The degradation and unhappiness pervading in Persia of his time easily attracted his attention, and quite early in his career, an inner search for a true solution of the problem became imperative in the case of the Prophet of Persia. On a final analysis of the situation it appeared to Prophet Zoroaster that unhappiness and all that went with it, was the result

Zoroaster

of the supreme struggle that was going on within man, as well as without him, and so long as this struggle resulted in the success of evil as against good, man was bound to be unhappy. He symbolized this struggle as one between Ahura-Mazda, the Good Spirit—'Lord of Wisdom', and Ahriman, 'Master of Evil'; and he was of the view that so long as Ahriman dominated the scene, the people would continue to be unhappy. He felt that as between good and evil, good must triumph, which alone could usher-in an era of peace— peace within and peace without. He advocated a philosophy which was essentially moral in character, for he thought that the spirit of evil triumphed because the people were morally weak. He suggested a high moral life— a life of righteousness. According to him such a life, constantly led, would rightly train the mind, and the good in man shall be able to triumph over evil. His book of Sacred Writings—the Avesta, the Persian Bible, breathes of nothing else but virtuous conduct. He felt that for the happiness of the mind, righteous conduct is absolutely necessary. His whole ethic breathes nothing but pity for the suffering and love for the righteous. His teachings may be summed up thus, "Good thoughts, good words and good deeds". By good thoughts, good words, and good deeds man could lend an exceptional support to the mind, which would then be able to withstand the forces of evil. To Zoroaster certain virtues appeared to be essential for

His Teachings

righteous conduct. Among them Truth came first, followed by Justice and Humanity, and finalized by Charity. The emphasis that Zoroaster laid on Truth was such that the Greek Historian Herodotus had to confess that among the three things that each Iranian was made to learn in his life speaking the truth came first horse-riding and wielding of the bow and arrow came next. The two great political masters of Persia—Cyrus and Darius—displayed remarkable humanity and extra-ordinary generosity, which only conquerors with a noble mind could alone display. The breadth of vision that Cyrus displayed when he released the Jews from bondage at Babylon, and re-built their temple at Jerusalem, remain unparalleled in the history of man. The idea of charity, and constructive charity at that, was also particularly emphasised by the Prophet of Persia. The purpose of charity was to raise those brethren of theirs who were not endowed with the requisite opportunity and ability that Providence had showered on some The principle of charity was born out of the principle of brotherhood, and this principle of brotherhood was evolved out of the faith in one God—the creator of the Universe. If God was One and He created the world, then man-kind was a brotherhood, and it was an important duty of the individual to help those who were in need of aid, when he was competent enough to be of some use to them. In addition the charity was to be such as not to smack of superiority or inferiority complex. Charity was not to make the

giver or the taker of it conscious of that fact. Charity implied an imperceptible raising by the better-situated man, of the less fortunate, without creating consciousness of obligation in the giver or the taker. Prophet Zoroaster also laid great stress on reverence to women and a high moral life. In his doctrine there is no place for ritual or ceremony. And at the same time his faith suggests no asceticism or self-mortification. His was the heroic faith that man could control himself without much-a-do, and by righteous conduct he could reach his spiritual goal. Zoroastrianism recognizes the Fire as the symbol of the Ahura-Mazda. This signifies non-idolatrous nature of the faith, and determines the true character of the Divine Personality. The Fire provides a true test by which to judge purity. The fire destroys evil, and the good comes out of the test far brighter than before. The fire was thus the symbol of purity and righteousness. It stood for the Spirit of Good— the Ahura-Mazda.

The net consequence of the teachings of the Prophet of Persia was that he was able to bring the Persians under one religious and political banner, and he gave rise to dynastic rule in Persia, which has bequeathed a worthy legacy to posterity. The Persians joined hands under Cyrus, who defeated the Medes and threatened the West. The extra-ordinary career of Cyrus was a grand spectacle on which were fastened all eyes of the west, with wonder and alarm. This resulted in an alliance of the western powers,

under the leadership of Lydia, to check the sudden menace, which had risen like a meteor in the eastern skies. Cyrus accordingly attacked Lydia first, from the north, and captured that region; and its supporters soon shared the same fate. By 538 B. C. the whole of Asia Minor and the Babylonian Empire of the Chaldeans was annexed by Persia. But Cyrus did not survive very much longer to enjoy the fruit of his efforts. He fell in battle in 529 B. C. against the north-east nomads. He was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who subdued Egypt in 525 B. C. This extensive Empire of Persia was a grand spectacle in the political firmament of that day. The easy success that Persia attained was greatly due to her army. The mass of the Persian army consisted of bow-men, whose storm of arrows at long range overwhelmed the enemy long before the hand-to-hand fighting began. Then bodies of skill-ful Persian horsemen, hovering on either wing, rode-in and completed the destruction of the foe. Cambyses was succeeded to the Persian throne by Darius, who established an enviable administration in the Persian Empire. He created a just, humane and intelligent administration. It is true that his was an autocratic rule, where the subject-nations particularly had no voice in the Government, but it was a benevolent despotism. The Persian empire was divided into 23 Satrapies or provinces, and each province enjoyed great local

Cyrus

Darius

autonomy. The emperor, however, exercised an exceptional vigilance over the component parts of the empire, and laid great insistence on the regular payment of the reasonably fixed tribute to the emperor and supply a fixed quota of troops to the Imperial army. In order to safeguard imperial interests each province had three officers—the Satrap or Civil Governor, who had no control over the army and was in charge of the civil administration only; the Military Commander, who received his salary from the Civil Governor, but who was under orders from the the King; and the Imperial Secretary, who was an imperial officer, keeping a watch over the Satrap and the Military Commander. This system of divided control made the officers faithful to a vigilant monarch. In addition, Darius also organized a C. I. D. system, called the Eyes and Ears of the King, who submitted regular reports to the Imperial Master from the various parts of the empire, on the affairs of the State. Darius, however, is known for his broadness of vision in introducing new ways of life in his empire, which went a long way in bettering the lot of the people and fortifying the position of the empire. He adopted the Egyptian Solar Calendar, since he found it more convenient than the Lunar Calendar of his country. He encouraged maritime enterprise by the restoration of the canal connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean and by the exploration of the Indus and the Indian Ocean. The Persians developed an Alphabet of 39 signs. Their writing was

cuneiform—a mixture of Armeanian and old Persian. He encouraged the study of the science of medicine. For this he had to send out Persian scholars to the medical schools in Egypt, which were fully equipped and which were under his patronage. He encouraged astronomy and furthered the policy of better means of communication. Well-paved roads, with suitable arrangements for safety and convenience, made communications quicker and connected the out-posts of the empire. It will be perceived that the changes wrought by Darius had been already in operation in the conquered territories of Persia, like Egypt, Asia-Minor and Mesopotamia, but Darius did not fight shy of borrowing from a conquered country some thing that was likely to prove useful to his countrymen. That showed his particular genius. Darius admirably succeeded in becoming a great administrator, who had been able to organise the administration so well as to make the empire last for the next few centuries, in spite of worthless successors. But in his career of conquest he was less fortunate. He succeeded in annexing the land west of the Indus to his already extensive empire, but while moving west to conquer the Greek ports on the Eastern Mediterranean, he came in conflict with the rising power of the Greeks of the main-land. He was not able to appreciate why the European Greeks were meddling in his affairs, when he was engaged in annexing strong-holds on his side of the Mediterranean, and he therefore planned an attack against the Greeks. A

large and strong fleet of ships was organised in 490 B. C. The forces of Persia moved out for the defeat of the Greeks through the conquest of Athens. It appeared for a moment that the fate of the rising nations of Europe was sealed, since in man-power and in fighting capacity the Persians were definitely in a superior position. Athens appeared virtually un-aided on the field of battle, but its small ships and swift mariners, as also its patriotic warriors, achieved that miracle which the British were able to repeat in defeating the Spanish Armada in the time of Queen Elizabeth. At the Battle of Marathon nature aided the Greeks, and the Persian host was routed. Darius returned home discomfited, writhing with rage, and breathing vengeance. The Battle of Marathon had decided the fate of Europe. Though Darius left a legacy of war with the Greeks to his son Xerxes, when he died, Xerxes could not possibly succeed against the Greek host. The Persians were a land-power, un-used to fighting at sea, and it was merely out of vanity that Darius had embarked on an expedition of doubtful value. Xerxes followed in the foot-steps of his father, but his forces were defeated in 480 B. C. on the battle-fields of Salamis and Mycale, which gave a death-blow to Persia, once and for all. The zenith of Persian glory had been reached and the decline had begun. Persia suffered heavily under Xerxes, and it lay a broken reed, to be annexed by Alexander in the 4th century B. C.

Persia, under the influence of Zorcaster, had acquired a rather homogeneous character, and a phenomenal rise in the political firmament was made by that country. But this exceptional phenomenon could not last for very long, as new powers were rising, which made it impossible for far-flung empires to continue their imperialistic existence for long, and thus Persia's meteoric rise suffered as quick a downfall.

THE GREEK CIVILIZATION

European Civilization which guides the world to-day traces its origin to Greek Civilization. A study of Greek Civilization therefore makes an interesting and instructive study.

Government and Democracy

The most note-worthy characteristic of the Greeks and their successors, the Europeans, is there realization that for the enjoyment of life the individual must be vigilant. Vigilance is the price that the Greeks paid for the glory they attained in their civilization and culture. The primary need of the people, according to the Greeks, was a good government, which afforded an equal and ample opportunity to the individual for his maximum growth, and the Greeks were careful enough to safeguard the interests of the citizens in the government. Their interest in politics therefore yielded interesting results of far reaching importance. The Greeks experimented with varied forms of government to suit the requirements of the citizens, and they became the fore-runners of a system of government, which has not been bettered since. The Greeks started their political career with monarchy, when the king stood as the embodiment of

Monarchy

the welfare of the people. Benevolent kings, with a nobility of heart, made, it possible for their countrymen to enjoy peace, prosperity and cultural progress. But other kings, who formed an overwhelming majority, were autocratic tyrants engrossed in selfishness. The Greeks soon realized that concentration of political power in the hands of a single individual was not likely to yield good results every time, because man's selfishness is bound to over-power him, when the welfare of the citizen would be relegated to the back-ground. They therefore initiated a new type of government in which political power was made to reside, not in the hands of a single individual, but in the hands of a few Noble-men. The Greeks had experimented with kings for five centuries upto 700 B. C. and now they embarked upon a new political experiment. This time also the Nobility, like the initial kings, endeavoured to better the lot of the common people by colonization, encouragement to agriculture, industry and commerce. But very soon the Nobility also became selfish, and the people were obliged to embark on a new political adventure. Though the rights of the common man had been written down, the Noble-men had brushed these rights aside, and therefore some leaders of political thought felt that the rights of man to full individual growth could only be safe in a system of government in which the individual partipated. Solon thus advocated a government by the people,

Aristocracy

which could easily be for the people. Democracy therefore appeared on the soil of Greece, but it could not be introduced too quickly if it was to yield wholesome results. The Greeks had not yet built up their national character. They were still over-powered by clannish conservatism and Cleisthenes therefore wanted to nationalise the people in their outlook for the betterment of his country. His system of national and cultural institutions, in place of tribal associations, laid the true foundation for the proper working of this highly delicate political experiment of democracy. Cleisthenes was also conscious that the fruits of democracy may not turn out to be as pleasant as they were expected to be, if some provision was not made for the removal of an anti-democratic executive-head. He therefore introduced the system of ostracism or banishment of executive officers on an adverse vote by the citizens while they were still in office. But before democracy could be put into operation in Greece, the people, uncertain of the democratic experiment, fell prey to benevolent autocracy of the Tyrants. and yet in spite of such able and noble Tyrants like Pisistratus, within the span of two centuries, the Greeks came to the conclusion that democracy was the only solution for their political and cultural advancement, and a democratic system of government was introduced in Greece round about 500 B. C.

Solon

Cleisthenes

Democracy as experimented in Greece was a

direct democracy, where all the free citizens directly participated in the government by being the members of the legislatures, and yet it was a limited democracy, since slaves—who formed the majority of the population—, women, foreigners and others under the age of 21, were not considered free citizens. Moreover, the experiment was limited to small areas, for democracy was practised in the Greek City-states, which were not larger than an Indian District. Democracy as an experiment in government succeeded in Greece only during those epochs when the citizens were truly educated in the Socratian sense of the term, and stuck to their judgements un-influenced by selfish motives. Democracy therefore has proved to be a very delicate experiment, which can succeed in a land of limited area, inhabited by intellectuals, who think in terms of the good of the community first. Democracy in the world today is not able to yield the results that we expect from it, because it is being operated in unlimited areas and among people who are not properly educated and who are selfish.

The Greeks showed alterness of mind not only in the sphere of political life but also in other cultural spheres of human existence. And they were able to attain the height of their grandeur in the age of Pericles, extending from 461 B. C. to 429 B. C. The Greeks have produced a literature of perennial interest. The Greeks quite early in their career developed a keen sense of beauty and their ideas found

easy vent in poetry. They became masters in the composition of epigrams and they also evolved epic poetry. The Greek poet Homer furnishes a classical example of epic poetry, in whose compositions are pictured the early exploits of the Greeks on a national basis. The Odyssey and the Illiad form specimens in world's great literature. Under the patronage of Pericles the Greek drama rose to its highest pinnacle, and the age of Pericles presented to eternity, among many others, the four great dramatists —Aeschylus. Sophocles, Euripedes and Aristophanes. Tragedy went side by side with Comedy, and the drama, besides affording entertainment, also served the purpose of human reform. The Greeks also developed prose–writings of a unique standard and the works of the two historians Herodotus and Thucydides may well be cited in this regard. It had come to be realized that a writer must have a full grasp of the language and should be rational in his statement of ideas. And history came to be a science, in addition to its being an art, when Thucydides selected his masterful language to investigate and authenticate facts. In addition to the writers noted above there were several others who enriched Greek literature and today the world is able to recognise its debt to the Grecks in the matter of the expression of great human ideas.

Dramatists

Historians

The Greeks, by the nature of things, also

developed the art and science of oratory. In a democracy the orator is able to wield a greater influence than the man of the sword or the man of the quill. The assembly is swayed more by human speech than by the written word or the glitter of the sword, and the destiny of the nation is made by the power of speech. The Greeks, particularly under the influence of the Sophists, developed a mastery in oratory and the classic example of Demosthenes easily serves as a land-mark in the history of oratory. His Philippics not only roused the lethargic and luxurious Athenians to defend their national freedom, but they have remained as a venerable guide to all orators even of the highest stature in posterity.

Oratory

Next to literature and oratory may be noticed the artistic genius of the Greek people. It appears for a moment that art ran through the very veins of the Greeks. The way they beautified their cities and ornamented their houses has remained unsurpassed till this day. Ictinus, the master-architect of the Periclean Age, has given to us the beautiful city of Athens, with its Acropolis adorned by the Parthenon. This well-planned city was beautified by the master-artist Phidias, the friend of Pericles, and after he had finished his task there were more statues than men adorning the streets of Athens. The art of the sculptor and the painter reached

Art & Architecture

its height in the Periclean era of Greek history, and Phidias, with his 38 feet long masterpiece of Goddess Athene, in marble and gold, suffices to register the claim of his country in the artistic history of mankind.

Next to the pure arts the Greeks also attended to the study of the sciences, which include Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Mathematics and above all Medicine. Anaxagoras, Pythag ras, Thales and Hippocrates are names to conjure with in the history of world science. Hippocrates, in particular, standarized the science of medicine by not only evolving internal and external medicine and surgery, but by advocating the writing down of the diagnosis of patients and advocating strict professional morality. On the whole the Greeks made an all-round advance in the varied sciences, and claim a worthy place in this realm of human activity in the history of man.

Sciences

Above all the Greeks also produced philosophers of great merit, the tallest of whom was of course Socrates. Ugly and uncouth, Socrates possessed an exceptional forehead of great splendour and brightness, and he was correctly pronounced as the wisest man of his time by the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The philosophy of Socrates was writ large on the walls in the temple of God Apollo at Delphi, and that

Philosophy

philosophy holds good even now. That mighty flavour was concentrated in the words 'KNOW THY SELF,' and the whole of the life of Socrates was invested in knowing himself, and convincing others to do the same. An analysis of ones self made it possible for the individual to erect a solid structure of his personality on the rock-stone of rationality for its foundation. A life of virtue and truth, a life based on rational judgement, supported by the inner-voice, was advocated by Socrates. Incidentally Socrates was also a political and educational philosopher, apart from his being an ethical one. His philosophy of reliance on the voice from within, echoes Gandhian philosophy of modern times. His advocacy of the true aims of education is worth notice. According to him true education should be the education of the mind, by the aid of which man might fortify his judgment and strengthen his physical frame, to be alert enough to hear the golden bells of his inner-voice. At the same time Socrates was a true democrat and his democratic nature may be traced in his advocacy of true education for the Greek citizens. He realized that so long as the Greek citizens were not truly educated, the faculty of their judgment will remain warped and they will not be able to decide their political issues correctly, and thus they shall jeopardize the destiny of their nation.

To sum up the Greeks were able to develop their culture and civilization in its various and varied

phases, and they have succeeded in presenting to the world at large a glorious picture of human endeavour in the conquest of civilization, and the price of their success has been an alertness on the part of the individual citizen and an equal ambition to rise to the noblest stature in life, of which he is capable. The Greeks therefore afford us an inimitable example of human glory and grandeur, which is a worthy ideal for men to pursue even now.

ROMAN CIVILIZATION

The glamour that Rome has enjoyed in the history of man is indeed unique. The practical genius of the Romans is of such outstanding merit that the world has to look up to Rome for many and varied pratical innovations in the life of man.

The Romans, like the Greeks, were anxious to maintain personal liberty, and in their endeavours to secure the freedom of the individual, they were able to evolve institutions of permanent value to man.

Political Institutions

Their political career took nearly the same trend as happened to be the case with the Greeks, but in that experimentation from monarchy to aristocracy and subsequently to democracy they were able to usher-in pleasant surprises for the student of history and the scholar of world affairs. Though, like the Greeks, they got their laws written down to safeguard personal liberty, still they thought it necessary to create the institution of the Tribunes, who were to be the elected public guardians of the legal freedom of the citizen. This institution of the Tribunes denotes the very practical way in which the Romans wanted to guarantee their individual freedom in spite of the

Tribunes

overwhelming influence of the nobility and other higher classes. The Tribunes, whose person was considered sacred, could discharge the responsibility towards the people quite easily and ably by the powers they possessed. Though the Romans, like the Greeks, evolved a government by the people and for the people, they thought it essential to institute an authority, who shall be able to safeguard the interests of the nation in times of emergency,—political, economic, social or any other. Ordinarily a government managed by the people is enough, but in times of national stress and strife a rule by a single masterful personality is absolutely essential. During the last World War, in spite of the ascendency of democracy in the world, political exigencies compelled mankind to raise men like Roosevelt and Churchill, Hitler and Mussolini, to the status of absolute dictators, to ably guide the destiny of their nations. But as soon as the emergency had ceased to exist the dictators were at once either replaced by truly democratic executive-heads or they transformed themselves into such beings. Likewise economic experiments of vital importance to the destiny of nations also necessitate the institution of dictatorship and it is on this account that the U. S. S R. has accepted the dictatorship of Lenin and Stalin and will continue to do so, till Communism has been fully operated, though Communism believes in a government by the people. Dictatorship is a temporary political

Dictatorship

weapon which can yield the most positive and the most wholesome results in emergent times, and this fact was fully appreciated by the Romans, who in their Republican State afforded recognition, for the first time in the history of man, to the institution of Dictatorship. In their Imperial Government the Romans evolved the principle of Imperium-et-Liberatas and thus led the world to a very sane imperial policy. Even a states man of the stature of Disraeli had to admit that the principle of internal autonomy and external control would prove to be a fruitful imperial policy for any the best British Ministry. With the growth of political consciousness the only way that Imperialism can follow is the way indicated by the Romans. The Romans also popularized the idea of controlling the world by one Central Authority.

Imperial Policy

Their empire was a phenomenon beheld by the world, not for a short time, but for six hundred long years, and the modern thinkers have utilized this phenomenon of the unification of the Roman World to solve the greatest political problem of to-day. In order that the world should be able to avoid war, it is necessary that a Central Authority be created, which shall be respected by all nations, which should guide impartially the destiny of nations, by controlling the nations externally and affording them internal autonomy. The modern world owes it to Rome—this idea of One World.

One World

The Roman World also universalized the Christian Faith. Today Christianity is one of the leading religions of the world. This became possible as a result of the mighty struggle between Christianity and the Roman Emperors, and in spite of the worst persecution of The Christian by the Romans, Christianity triumphed so completely that the Roman Emperor Constantine realized that the continuance of the Roman Empire was possible only by making Christianity the religion of the Roman World. Thus Rome became the diffusing centre of the Christian Faith and added glory to the Roman empire and lustre to the world.

Christianity

The Romans demonstrated their practical genius in the realm of Law. While Greece evolved Constitutional Law, to safeguard the interests of the individual in the State, the Romans at once realized that what the individual needed more was protection from his neighbour, and therefore evolved a rational body of laws to safeguard the person and property of the citizen. The Corpus Juris Civil of Justinian is a living monument to the practical genius of the Romans. So logical and impartial is the Code of Justinian, embodying civil and criminal law, that the most noteworthy nations of the world have thought fit to embody its basic principles in their own codes. For example the enunciation of the principle of Equality before the Law, introduced by the Romans,

Law

has become the focal point of all the legal systems persisting in the world to-day. The Roman World therefore has gone a long way in safeguarding the person and property of the individual and has made it possible for man to live among good neighbours.

Architecture

The people of Rome built up certain attributes in their building structures which have contributed a great deal to modern architecture. Their popularization of arches, bridges, ponds, roads, etc., are some of those characteristic features of architecture that dominate structures at the present day. Rome was an antiquated old city of bricks when Augustus came to control the destiny of the Roman world, and yet under his patronage the city of Rome was so re-built as to be a city in marble, in place of one in brick. The Colosseum or the open air theatre, built in the time of Titus, the Darling of Humanity, is a typical example of Roman architecture. Spacious and accommodating, solid and lofty, it set new standards in architecture. The city of Pompeii, submerged under the lava from Mount Vesuvius, and now brought to light by the archaeologists, authenticates the wholesome attributes of Roman architecture.

Literature

In the realm of literature the Romans have done their bit, and a great bit at that, under masters like Cicero and Caeser, Virgil and Horace, Livy and Ovid, Catallus and Tacitus and Lucretius. Latin literature indeed attained a height and grandeur

which every other literature would be desirous of attaining.

In the sphere of Education the Romans afforded to the world that well-known treatise on the subject called the Instituto Oratoria by Quintilian. Through this theorisation on education the world was led ahead by the Romans. It came to be realized that the growth of the nation greatly depended on the educator, who, beside being properly paid, should also enjoy a high social status, in order that he should be able to take a true educational interest in the younger generation of the nation. In addition Quintilian emphasised the fact that educational courses must conform to the ability of the average student, so that education and its acquirement should become a pleasure and not a burden. The modern world can obtain wholesome results provided education is rationalised and is made to conform to the ability of the scholar, and at the same time secures to the teacher respectable status and a suitable salary.

Education

In the realm of Science the Romans mainly borrowed from the Greeks, but added to it, in order to make the sciences yield more practical results. The introduction of the Hospital System in the science of human healing is a fine instance in point. Medicines can cure disease, but a quiet atmosphere and a greater regularity in diet and dozage is bound

Science

to expedite the recovery of the patient. Suitable environment is of as paramount an importance as the giving of medicine, to cure physical ills. This is the supreme contribution of the Romans to the science of medicine, and its wholesome effects can be easily perceived to-day

In short the Romans have in their life and career contributed a great deal to the civilization and culture of man. They attended to every enterprise with zest and vigour, but they tended to make it yield practical results. The Romans were no theorists and philosophers; they were practical men of the world. Practicality is the order of the day to-day, and therein lies the utility and genius of the Romans to posterity.

ISLAMIC EMPIRE & ITS CONTRIBUTION

There is no individual or nation but will show his or its genius, once he is given the opportunity. Arabia presents a classic example, where an arid land, with a sparse, yet sturdy population, with nomad habits, used to wasting its energies in futile feuds and extensive procreation of children, supplying mercenaries to other nations building up great empires on their strength, but itself a broken reed, virtually good for nothing. But when it was afforded its destined opportunity, with the birth of the Prophet of Islam among them, its people rose meteorically, to erect the most extensive empire in human history, in the shortest span of time, and kept alive the flame of true knowledge, when wise nations found their destinies in the melting pot, and held high and aloft the torch of Civilization and Culture, and bequeathed an inimitable legacy to the world. A brief survey of the growth of Islamic Civilization therefore makes an interesting and instructive study.

Prior to the 7th century A. D Arabia had played no direct part in the history of humanity. The peninsula, however, had been a reservior from which the various branches of the Semitic race, the Babylonians, Israelites, Phoenicians and others,

moved out and vitally affected the course of human history. Arabia till the 7th century had been a province of one empire or another; now it was her turn to erect an empire of her own. Prior to the advent of the Prophet in the desert peninsula, life—social, political and religious,—was chaotic in Arabia, which accounted for the non-contribution of the Arabs to World History before the 7th century A. D.

Early History

Prior to the Prophet, Arabia was a land of unrelieved tribal struggle. The arabs lived in tribes, recognised the tribal leader, on the basis of personal qualities and ability, and worshipped the tribal God, whose idol was enshrined in the Kaaba at Mecca. Nomads as they were, the arabs loved fighting, and therefore the tribes delighted in constant warfare on the flimsiest issue. This continuous flow of blood necessitated the invariable increase in tribal man-power. Hence the only recreation of the Arabs, other than fighting, was procreation. Polygamy and Polyandry were frequently resorted to, and many other unseemly social practices marred Arab society. But the might of the tribe was dependent on the growing number of its males, and therefore not very decent customs were not only tolerated but filially accepted. The constant tribal warfare made national homogeneity impossible among the arabs. The only relieving feature in the political life of the arabs was the Annual Divine Truce, when all tribes

Arabia before the Prophet

declared peace and gathered at Mecca, to pay homage to their God and witness national—physical as well as poetical—gymnastics. Just as the Olympics were the only unifying force among the Greeks in their early history, the Annual Truce in Arabia was the only national trait of the Beduin. "The Kaaba was the only unifying force in an otherwise chaotic world". Social life there seemed to be none. Women were despised, and were tolerated only to the extent to which they bore male children. The Arab marriage methods however were romantic. The Arab did not take a wife from his own tribe. He often stole one from another. The arab-wooing season was the spring, when varied tribes were camped round an oasis. He made his choice at the camel-pastures, wells, or round the fire at night, when men and women flocked together. Long winter wanderings made the Arab amorous, and then his advances made rapid progress. Before the tribal camps broke up, however, he would have had made his decision. Either the girl was bought, or she had to be voluntarily stolen. The religion of the Arabs was also a crude one. There was no high philosophy about it. It was more or less a bundle of un-understandable superstitions and beliefs. There were some 360 idols, representing the Gods of the various tribes of the desert. They were deposited at the Kaaba in the town of Mecca. Among the idols the Black Stone enjoyed a supreme status, "the chief fetish of those parts," representing, as it did, the highest Divine

Being. The Kaaba afforded a sacred importance to Mecca in contrast to Medina, also on the caravan route to Syria. Medina boasted sweet water and shady groves, but it was only a trade-mart, and at the commencement of the 7th century had a population of only 15,000 all told, in contrast to Mecca's 20 to 25000, when Mecca had bitter water-springs. Its religious sanctity guaranteed it a greater population

Prophet's Early Career

In this all enveloping chaos was born the Prophet in Arabia, in 570 A. D. Mohammed ibn Abdallah ibn Abdal Muttalib ibn Hashim, the Quraishite, lost his father a couple of months after his birth. Abdallah had been a petty merchant; at his death he seems to have been in pretty adverse circumstances, for all that he left to his son was a small house, five hungry camels and a slave. Born in a good Meccan tribe, the traditional custodians of the Kaaba, but now in very humble circumstances, the Prophet had to pass his early years in extreme poverty. His mother Aminah, of the Zuhrah Clan, followed his father a few years later, leaving the child to the care of the grand-father, Abdal Muttalib, who at his demise gave up the charge to his son, Abu Talib. The Prophet learned a lot in this early school of adversity, and grew up into an earnest lad, anxious to make his own living, and be less of a burden on his benefactors. He engaged himself to be the caravan conductor of Lady Khadijah, a rich merchant's

widow, who was independently carrying on business inherited from her first two husbands. Young Mohammed took a keen interest in the commercial pursuits of his employer, who in her turn conceived a lively interest in him, and though fifteen years older than he, proposed marriage to him. By this marriage she bore the Prophet four daughters and two sons; the latter, however, dying in childhood. After his marriage the Prophet spent his time in comparative comfort and affluence and could then attend to the affairs of the soul. In his caravan excursions he had come in contact with men of varied shades of religious opinion, and was greatly impressed by them. Keen individual thinkers in Arabia of this time were greatly disappointed at the current peninsular religious beliefs, and many of them, by personal endeavour, had come to believe, and were content with a general monotheism, such as the poet Umayyah ibn Ali-as-salt of Taif. Mohammed seems to have flung himself into asceticism and given himself to broodings about his soul's salvation, for days on end, on Mount Hira near Mecca. These daily trances during Ramazan enabled him to realize the ultimate truth, and see the true Light. Mohammed thus put on the mantle of the Prophet and gave birth to Islam, when he was about forty; for he felt the urge to guide all to eternal Light, once he had distinctly perceived it. At first he was rather reluctant and sceptic, but Lady Khadijah encouraged him in his peculiar enterprise.

The faith which Mohammed professed and proclaimed has been acclaimed by all. The most conservative estimate finds that Islam in many respects is worthy to be compared with the best religions of the world. "Islam", states Flenley, "represented an advance in Arab religion and thought, and it had also elements rendering a much wider acceptance". Even H. G. Wells admits that Islam possesses many fine attributes. The Holy Koran, the Muslim Bible, sums up the new Faith, and minutely regulates the life of the faithful. It enjoins the faithful to believe in one Supreme Being, denying every other supposed deity; to offer prayers of thankfulness and guidance five times a day, at sunrise, afternoon, before and after sunset and just before retiring for the night; to be charitable according to one's mite; to observe the Ramazan Fast for the purification of the soul; and above all perform the Holy Pilgrimage to Mecca. Apart from the above five main duties, Islam prescribed a moral code, insisting on righteous conduct, abstinence from drink and gambling, respecting all elders and parents and leaders of all Faiths, being tolerent, assigning a respectful place to women, and above all, on realizing the principle of the Brother-hood of man. The chief sources of strength of the new Faith lay in the simple enunciation of the good life, understandable by all, its insistence on kindliness and consideration in life, its un-compromising and non-idolatrous

Islam

monotheism, its meticulous prescription of worship, and its non-ritualistic character. The simple and un-ambiguous statement of ideas has attracted many followers to Islam. "It contains no doctrines which confuse or perplex men's minds", observes Davies. "It is fairly proof against the theological elaborations that have perplexed and divided Christianity and smothered the spirit of Christ", remarks Wells. Islam leaves no loophole for the emergence of the sacrificial priest. It recognises learned doctors, teachers and preachers, but no priests. Islam has been greatly influenced by Judaism and Christianity. The respect it enjoins for Moses, 'the Companion of God', and Christ, "the Friend of God", as against Mohammed the "Prophet of God"; the transcription of the Jewish salutation with a slight sound variation; and according to some scholars, the borrowing of the very basic name of God, show foreign influences on Islam.

Progress of the Faith

But it had not been all smooth sailing when the Prophet propounded the new Faith among the pagan Meccans. In fact Islam struck a blow at the custodians of the Kaaba and others, who depended for their livelihood on idolatrous and pagan beliefs of the Arabs. In fact the opposition to the new teaching was so great that it became difficult for the Muslims to live in Mecca, and even the Prophet would not have been spared, had he not belonged to the tribe of the Quraish. However the Muslims were welcome at Yathrib, which subsequently became Medina—Medinat

Rasul Allah, the City of God's Apostle,—and even the Prophet had to repair to it, when his further continuance in the city of his birth was considered dangerous to the interests of the Faith. This migration—Hijrat—from Mecca to Medina was undertaken by the Prophet on 20th September 622 A. D. and gave rise to the Muslim Calendar. It was soon realized by the Arab Prophet that the unfaithful could be brought to the right path by the sword, and from Medina commenced the holy war for Islam, and within ten years his followers had 'put out the Holy Fire in Persia and unfurled the green flag over the grave of Christ"; thus challenging successfully the might of the greatest powers of the times. The Prophet brought Mecca under his control in 629 A. D., demolished all the idols of the Kaaba, except the Black Stone, which even originally represented the Highest Divinity. "In the centre of Mecca stands the Ka' bah, a four-cornered structure, now 16½ yards high, after many reconstructions, in the corner of which the Black Stone, probably the oldest idol worshipped there, is embedded in the wall, 58½ inches off the floor. The famous spring Zam Zam, around which the city no doubt sprang up, gushes out in the temple court". The Prophet passed into the Great Beyond in 632 A. D., but by that time the banner of Islam had been firmly planted in Arabia and the neighbouring countries.

Islam and its prophet provided the requisite

unity, leadership, and driving force for Arab expansion. The Arabs were brave and determined fighters. Inured to hardship their wandering habits made them mobile. And now their imagination had been fired by the Prophet of the Desert. They took to arms, and within barely a century of the demise of the Prophet, they were able to erect the most extensive empire of the times, extending from the Indus in the east, to the Atlantic in the west,—including W. India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, N. Africa, and Spain. Their advance north-wards was, however, checked by their defeat at Tours in mid-France in 732 A. D. But unfortunately schisms and divisions in the Muslim ranks, quite early in their career, made the continuance of the Islamic Empire as a single unit impossible. Succession to the Islamic Caliphate broke up the earlier solidarity by the creation of the two sects of Shias and Sunnis among them. The simple nomad Arab had been pampered with soul-destroying luxury. Extensive power made the Arabs insupportable autocrats. And above all, the empire was so far-flung as to be unwieldy, resulting in its break-up into regional Caliphates of Asia at Damascus and subsequently at Baghdad; of Africa at Cairo, and of Europe at Cardova in Spain. In spite of this break-up, the various Islamic regions created cultural standards, which made possible the assimilation of knowledge, and encouraged every conceivable enterprise, for its furtherance. It is here

Building an Ismalic Empire

that the Islamic Empire made its permanent contribution to humanity.

Islamic Universities

In spite of their autocracy and luxury, some of the Caliphs, at any rate, provided the requisite atmosphere for progress. Their well-ordered Government, with sound schemes of taxation, their revival of the means of easy communication between the various parts of the empire, their postal systems, and irrigational schemes, their hospitals and asylums, and their encourgement to industries, kept the population well-engaged and well-furnished. Above all, the Caliphs proved to be great patrons of learning. Five great centres of learning were established in the Islamic Empire at Baghdad, Cairo, Cardova, Seville and Barcelona. Every one of these towns was not merely a seat of learning, but a centre of culture and civilization, to live where was a pleasure. Cordova, for example, boasted seventy libraries and 900 Public Baths, and was considered "the most civilized city in Europe, the wonder and admiration of the world". 'Whenever the Christian rulers of Leon or other places required a surgeon, an architect, a dressmaker or a singing master, it was to Cordova that they applied.' Cordova at the zenith of her glory boasted very well-organised Public Libraries and broad-based imparting of knowledge. The Libraries often times contained a million tomes of standard value on varied subjects, well catalogued and systematically arranged. All scholars, of

whatever nationality or religion were, most welcome at the Muslim Universities, to drink deep at the Fountain of Knowledge. "The scholars imbibed learning in that liberal spirit, for the lack of which Bruno was burnt and Galileo persecuted". To cite an instance, Pope Silvester II was educated at the Cardova University. The main original work of these Muslim Universities was to assimilate old knowledge and scientifically test its true value, and then recommence the enquiry from the point where it was left by the old Oriental Masters. It was in furtherance of this aim that all important scientific and literary works of great nations, like Greece, Rome, Egypt, and others, were translated into Arabic and tested on the touch-stone of reason by scholars. Indian scholars were invited to the Caliph's Court to aid in the proper transcription of not only the Epics and other master-pieces of Indian Literature, but also of all works of science, and it was thus, through Semitic translations, that the West became conversant with and stood amazed at the wisdom and insight into things, of the scholars of Bharat.

As a result of assimilation and progress the Muslim Universities registered noteworthy contributions, in every notable sphere of knowledge, at a time when the great nations of the world stood at the cross-roads. 'At a time when Europe was in darkness, the Muslim scholars of Spain held high the torch of Science and Literature. They taught

Medicine and Mathematics, Chemistry and Natural History, Philosophy and Fine Arts'. "Muslim Poetry and Literature, Muslim Architecture and Decorative Painting made Spain famous at a time when Europe was submerged in barbarism". 'New knowledge was added in Medicine, in Natural Science and Mathematics, new products of the earth were found and new words were introduced to designate there acquisitions—words like Zero, Coffee, Algebra, Sofa Magazine, Tariff etc'.

Architecture and Literature

In the sphere of architecture the Muslim architects developed the Mosque Architecture, with its arcades, its enclosed square court-yard, equipped with the ablution fountain, the oratory, with its pulpit, and the Mecca-directed niche, and above all, the tall slender minarets from which the faithful were called to prayer. Typically illustrative of Muslim architecture is the Al-Hambra at Grenada, considered as one of the architectural glories of the world. In literature, in the period of the Islamic Empire, the Arabic language was greatly enriched and Arabic Literature greatly increased in well-merited bulk. The most renowned Arabic prose-work, full of imaginative thought and powerful expression, is the 'Arabian Nights Tales', in spite of foreign influence working in its production. The Arabs had. quite early in the day, developed poetic genius, particularly under the impetus offered to it by the organisation of Poetic competitions during the period of the

Annual Divine Truce at Mecca. During the Imperial period the Muslim singers introduced a new note of adventure, chivalry and romance, which we find distinctly echoed in the Renaissance Poetry, and which afforded great impetus to new discoveries in all spheres of human activity, particularly in discovering new lands.

In the region of the sciences the Muslim scholars have done the greatest service to humanity. They gathered all that the Greeks, the Romans and other great eastern people had to say on science, and put it to the test of personal experience and in the light of it, made further contributions to it. A thorough study of human physiognomy was successfully undertaken, and Physiology and Hygiene were greatly specialised. Al-Hawi of Rhazes, the Cannon on Medicine of the Muslim Philosopher Avicenna, and the book on Optics by Al-Hasan of Basra, bear testimony to the monumental work done by the Muslim men of Medicine for the amelioration of the health of the world. These books were later translated into European languages, and continued for long as standard works on the Medical Science. The Muslim men of Medicine had also specialised in Surgery, and all diseases were being treated systematically, by the use of medicine and an advanced use of surgery, at a time when the Church in the Christian domain forbade its practice; "when religious rites such as exorcising imaginary devils were regarded as cures

Medicine

for diseases, and when quacks and charlatans abounded, the Muslims had a real science of medicine".

In the domain of Mathematics the Muslims achieved great success. They were the leaders of the Arabic numerals, which they framed in the light of Indian numerals. They popularised the Decimal System, though they did not invent it, and thus became the founders of every day Arithmatic. They made Algebra an exact science, and developed it considerably. Omar Khayam, the famous poet, was the author of a first rate book on Algebra. They are said to have laid the foundation of Analytical Geometry. The Muslim scholars solidly laid the foundation of plane and spherical Trigonometry. Ibn Musa was a specialist in spherical Trigonometry. In the science of Astronomy they made many valuable observations. In Physics they evolved the theory of the Pendulum. In Chemistry too they have been considered experts. Al Jabir was a note worthy Muslim chemist, who discovered the Salphuric Acid, Nitric Acid, and Acua Regia. Alembic and Alkali are Arabic terms, showing Arabic influence in chemistry. In the realm of Philosophy the Muslims produced at least two noteworthy men, Avicenna and Averros, 'who translated, interpreted, and corrected the systems and speculations of Greek thinkers.' Among other Muslim scholars and men of learning may be cited Ibn-Batuta, the famous naturalist

Mathematics

and historian, Al Beruni, the botanist and Al Idrisi, the geographer.

To sum up in the words of Baron Carra de Vaux "The Arabs formed a bond of union, a connecting link between ancient culture and modern civilization. When at the Renaissance the spirit of man was once again filled with zeal for knowledge and stimulated by the spark of genius, if it was able to promptly set at work, to produce and invent, it was because the Arabs had preserved and perfected various branches of knowledge, kept the spirit of research alive and eager, and maintained it pliant and ready for future discoveries".

ANCIENT INDIAN CIVILIZATION

India has been a land of romance—a land of varied people and varied climes. varied environment and varied genius, and yet the mosaic of culture and civilization it has presented to the world has baffled all, particularly its underlying and ever-lasting unity amid the ever shifting diversity in its life and history. Virile and versatile communities of the human species have inhabited this land of destiny since very ancient times. The bounties that nature has bestowed on this land of the Indus, and the Ganges, the Brahmputra and the Godavari, and a score of such other names, has afforded an ever alluring prospect, particularly to the people to the north-west, and they have tumbled into India at varying periods of its hoary history; and yet none have regretted their advent. Mother India has accepted into her bosom the for-saken sons of mother earth without hitch or hindrance—immigrants and invaders, Aryans and Dravidians, Persians and Greeks, Scythians, Parthians and Kushans, all have been absorbed, and all of them have lost the traces of their ancient origin, so enraptured by its rich and varied culture and civilization, and so engrossed in adding their own mite in enriching the

already admirable canvas. The peculiar and particular quality of the Indian people that has distinguished them is the insatiable quality of judicious assimilation and absorption of cultural attributes—a cosmopolitan spirit unknown in other lands and climes. India has evolved the quality of easy adjustability in accordance with the existing environment—the quality of ever-lasting life, the quality of eternal survival. And it makes a highly interesting and instructive study to review the rich and varied cultural heritage of India, when the Aryan and the Dravidian extended their helping hand to each other in making their life sublime, during the period of Hindu domination in India.

Historical background

Early Indian Historical Chronicle is yet in the melting pot, and yet the outline may be distinctly perceived. The authors of the Indus Valley Civilization dominated India till the Indo-Europeans, called the Aryans in India, over-whelmed them, in about the middle of the 2nd Millennium B. C. The light coloured Aryans were to be distinguished from the darker Dravidians not by the shade of their skin alone, but also on account of the differing modes of their lives. The Aryans were a pastoral people, living in tribes, who had early imbibed the uses of iron in their original habitat in the Central Asian grass-lands, and who had domesticated the horse. It was their superior weapons and the use of the horse that brought them success in battle against the in-

habitants of the cities with a hundred gates. But there was much within the city-walls which came handy and useful to the intelligent and energetic Aryans, and out of the happy mixture of Aryan and early Indian cultures was born what is now commonly denominated as Hindu Civilization. The Aryans soon settled down to their new life in India and imbibed a lot from the snub-nosed dark coloured people, who originally owned the land. Life became complex and a social order was evolved. Soon political issues made the emergence of a sound polity necessary. And above all, when early animosities of race had cooled down, the problems of the spirit were also tackled in mutual concord and a high and noble philosophy rewarded the efforts of the wise. Side by side literature also made its appearance and gained a great deal of fillip with the growth and development of civilization and culture.

Within the passage of a thousand years since the advent of the Aryans in India, the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges were thickly populated, and in a flourishing state of material prosperity, though there was no political unity in the region India was cut up and divided into limited principalities, governed by princes and people. The only bond that united the peoples of the various principalities was more spiritual than material. And yet the prevailing social order and religious philosophy had given rise to acute spiritual dissension and social discontent. Fortunately for India, at this time, in the 6th

century B. C. were born two great souls, Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavir, who re-elevated religion and philosophy to their former purity and glory and incidentally quietened social animosities, and generated a better bond of brotherhood among men than that which had subsisted before. It was about this time that a certain attempt was made at political unity under the banner of an Imperial rule. The rulers of Magadha with their capital originally at Rajgirha and subsequently at Patali-putra near modern Patna, were able to raise up their heads as the Imperial masters of Northern India. This became possible about the last quarter of the fourth century before Christ, when under Chandra-gupta the Mauryas established themselves as the suzerain rulers of the Indian valleys. But by then India's fame and prosperity had lured the Persians, and in their wake, the Greeks, under Alexander, to annex the rich and fruitful valley of the Indus. This impact of the Persians and the Greeks had its own distinct effect, particularly on Indian art and architecture, as also on Indian coinage, but their political influence was virtually negatived by the Mauryas. The Mauryas governed India from 322 B. C. to 184 B. C. Under Chandra Gupta, his minister Chanakya produced his political masterpiece, the Artha-shastra, which incorporated earlier political concepts, for example of Manu's Dharma Shastra etc., and enunciated the principles of Government, and the bond that subsists between the ruler and

the ruled. The greatest ruler of the Mauryan line was Samrat Asoka, (268–227 B. C.), who by the loftiness of his idealism made himself great. He advocated the philosophy of the "Imperialism of the intellect" in place of the "Imperialism of the sword", so commonly advocated and accepted by the world then and now.

After Asoka, however, the glory and grandeur of the Mauryan political edifice soon crashed to the ground, and gave place to small kingdoms and their usual squabbles. Western India once again witnessed the on–rush of invaders,—Scythians, Parthians and Kushans in turn; and all of them influenced Indian life appreciably, though they were soon submerged in the fast flowing stream of Indian culture. India emerged from its first Dark Age when the Guptas under Chandra Gupta (320 A. D.) once again afforded political unity to Bharata Varsha, and made life flow in one channel. The Guptas governed India till 650 A. D., and during their regime not only was political solidarity sought under the Gupta banner, but cultural life secured a flow un-known in Indian History prior or since. The Guptas became the great patrons of learning and art. The dizzy heights attained in the various arts and sciences made Gupta rule glorious in Indian History. Scholars and men of learning thronged at the Imperial Court and no honest effort ever went unrewarded. Life, material as well as spiritual, attained its highest

pinnacle. "Bliss was in that dawn to be alive, to be young was the very heaven".

But every glorious day gets eclipsed by the darkness of the night, and the glory wrought by Chandragupta, Samudra Gupta and Vikramaditya was overtaken by another Dark Age, till the light of culture and civilization was made to shed lustre on India by Harsha Vardhana, early in the 7th century A. D. During this second Dark Age in Indian History, the Huns from the north-west ran riot in this land of peace and plenty, to be soon quietened by its cultural surge. Harsha reiterated the lost ground and went forward. Hindu culture and civilization flowed in the same strain now as under the Guptas. But alas! the days of Hindu glory were numbered. Muslims, fired by the new philosophy of Islam, were looking out with covetous eyes all round, and India, usually politically weak, was an easy prey for them. And once and for all pure Hindu culture as such came to an end with the advent of Islam in India in 711 A. D.

But the Hindus by then had made their distinguished mark in every conceivable sphere of cultural activity, and each conqueror, in the course of time, was ultimately conquered by the cultural strength of India. It is therefore particularly instructive to assess the cultural achievements of ancient India.

In evaluating Hindu achievements the organisation

of Government and the establishment of political institutions command attention first. It may be true that India did not attain the stature of political unity it has witnessed during the modern age, particularly under the British, for any continuous and considerable period of time. Never the less, in spite of the existence of a number of separate kingdoms, into which India was split up early in the day, it gave rise to worthy systems of administration and the growth of admirable political institutions. The basic feature of government in India was essentially democratic, though a democratic form was never adhered to. It was the democratic spirit which pervaded the political atmosphere, though India did not become a stickler to democratic institutions as such. Political life in India had its roots in the village, the basic, yet, powerful unit of habitation in the country. Village life was controlled by the Samiti—a select and elected body—presided over by the head-man, which owed its allegience and existence to the Sabha or Panchyat of all the male adults of the village. Here was Indian Democracy in the making. The provincial chieftain was a replica of the Village Chief, and the King likewise, of the Provincial Head. The Indian King— Rajana, occupied that honoured place in the kingdom because he was there to safeguard the interests of the Jana, the Janata, the people. Rama, the hero of the Indian epic the Ramayana, served as the Ideal of the King, who

Government

made himself subservient to the common good and pursued the path of Niti, the absolute right. He was to be aided and advised in administration by men of approved merit. Though India did not formally accept the democratic form of government, it was definitely and decidedly democratic in spirit. The king became the recepient of glory and honour so long as he looked after the interests and welfare of the population. In case he misused political power he was to be overthrown, and a republican state was to be established; and instances are not wanting of Republican States in Ancient India, affirming the Indian democratic spirit.

India gave rise to the growth of the Cabinet system of Government. The administration was split into portfolios in charge of indivdual ministers and yet unified by joint deliberation on important issues and laying down of general policy. The evolution of distinct departments of Finance and Revenue, Army and the Admiralty, Justice and Health, Agriculture, Irrigation, and Public Works, Industries, Communications and Commerce etc. had taken place by the time the Mauryas governed India. Particular attention was, however, paid to the organisation of the War Office and the Local Administration of towns and cities. The varied aspects of Army organisation were each in charge of a Board of experts, and by the co-ordinated effort of six such boards the defence was very efficiently organised. The local administration was likewise managed by six boards

of five men each,—the Board of Health and Vital Statistics, the Board of Taxes, the Board of Weights and Measures, the Board of Markets, the Board for Foreigners and the Board of Industries and Handicrafts.

On the whole under strong rulers like Chandra Gupta Maurya, Asoka, Samudra Gupta, Vikramaditya and Harsha, internal peace, external security, agricultural, industrial and commercial facilities and patronage, and opportunities for the growth of art and architecture, science and religion were guaranteed to the population The Dharamashastra and Kautilaya's Arthashastra, the Manual of State-craft, served as a guide to kings and people alike in Hindu India. Eminent foreign visitors like Megasthenes, Fa-Hien, and Hiaun Tsiang, have nothing but praise for the government of the day.

Under an efficiently organised administration the people commonly led a prosperous and happy life.

Agriculture Industry and Commerce

The peace within the country created the requisite atmosphere for better life—agricultural and industrial. India is particularly endowed with a fertile soil and rich minerals, conducive to great industry. The government encouraged the cultivator to produce the best yield since Land Revenue was its mainstay. Towards that end the government afforded the population all facility, particularly irrigational facility. The erection of the Sudarsana Lake at Girnar for agricultural

purposes by Chandra Gupta Maurya is only a single admirable instance of state patronage to agriculture. Likewise patronage was afforded by the ruling dynasties to industry as well, and India developed the many handicrafts and industries that made the country famous throughout the world. The perfumes and spices, the cloths and jewellery, and varied other luxuries that India exported and exchanged for gold, made even the Imperial Romans nervous, for they caused an exceptional drain on their gold reserves; such popularity the inimitable Indian products had won in the west. And this secured for the country an unparalleled prosperity. The Government erected a network of high-ways, like the Mauryan Royal High-way from the N. W. Frontier to Pataliputra, the Indian capital, connecting the various parts of the country; and afforded every facility of storage of goods and safety, in addition to convenience of personal travel; and India was able to develop extensive internal commerce. Ancient sea and land routes connected India with far-off eastern countries like China and western countries like Greece and Rome profitably. The Mauryan admiralty commenced its patronage to Indian maritime commerce of the northern regions, which had already begun in the south, and this continued without abetment throughout the Hindu period, yielding considerable prosperity to the population, clearly evidenced in their extensive temple and public utility endowments. Fa-Hien mentions a Public Hospital raised and run from

public donated funds. The Sanchi Stupa inscription and Buddhist and Jain chronicles are quite eloquent about the religious endowments established by the merchant classes, bearing witness to the wealth of the Indian merchants. If too much of meaning is not read in the disparity of earnings of the various classes of the Indian population during the Hindu period, it is evident that India's economy then was quite sound and the people had ample opportunity for leading a happy and prosperous life.

Society

Hindu India also evolved an enviable social structure in addition to the creation of political institutions and organisation, and the production of considerable wealth. The Aryans on their advent in India did not boast of any social structure. Pastoral-Agricultural Aryans did not need any such elaboration. But on adjustment with their new environment of urban life in the Indus Valley and the necessity of subjugation of possible political foes, gave their life a new shade. Life assumed a complex character, and adjustments and alignments became necessary. The individual head of the family could no longer perform all the functions on behalf of his family, as in the past. It was well nigh impossible. Complexity in life necessitated specialisation in the important functions of life, and the Chatur-Varna was thus born. Society came to be divided into four main groups in accordance with the pursuit or profession of the individual. Life's main functions were three—

Spiritual Defence Function, Political Defence Function and Material Production Function. Man's salvation depended on sound education and deep insight into the problems of the spirit. For his earthly existence putting on a pleasant hue internal security and external tranquillity were necessary. And yet life would not be worth living if man could not command earthly delicacies. Each one of these prime requisites of the people implied an endeavour of a specific order, and each individual took to the performance of a suitable task, according to his ability, and secured all his wants through the compensation he received for the task performed by him. Thus those who engaged themselves in acquiring knowledge, material and spiritual, in order to impart it to others—in short, those who sought to afford spiritual salvation, 'whose mission it was to study, teach and perform the sacrifice', priests and learned men, the intellectual leaders,—came to be called Brahmins. Those who undertook to police the land within and without, who were detailed to protect the people—the warriors, inclusive of the king,—came to be termed as the Kshatriyas. The Material Production Function was sub-divided into the Superior Production Function and the Inferior Production Function. Those who engaged themselves in raising cattle, tilling the soil, professing superior crafts like those of the Goldsmith, Armourer, Metal-worker, Carpenter etc. and taking to commercial pursuits—the producers and distributors of wealth,—came to be styled as the

Vaishyas. And finally, those who took to the less inviting tasks of life,–labourers, menials and petty craftsmen,–came to be denominated as the Sudras. There still remained the primitive section of the population, whose association with the bulk of Indian humanity was rare. They were treated as outside the pale of civilized society, though their 'humble wicker baskets', and other services like 'scavenging, skinning the dead cattle, and burning the dead-bodies', were quite welcome.

The Indian people had come to appreciate the principle of Division of Labour and Efficiency of Work, and accordingly given rise to four main professions, which incidentally afforded them a new social set-up. The relations between the various classes were quite elastic and the professional social order was quite flexible. Though the original population was at first assigned mainly to the fourth profession, intermarriage and intermingling of the races made profession of a pursuit absolutely free and voluntary. There are instances of Brahmins' progeny taking to other professions and likewise the children of the Sudras, Vaishyas, and Kshatriyas professing other vocations. Badarayana Ved Vyasa, who edited and arranged the Vedas–the Indian Sacred Texts,—was the dark skinned son of a fisherwoman; Janaka, the Royal Kshatriya, turned into the Royal Teacher, at whose feet even the Brahmins sat, and Vishwamitra, another Kshatriya, who turned into the Composer of Vedic Hymns, are classical instances of the flexibility of Indian Caste

Society. Indian society was non-hereditary, unembarrassed even by the colour distinction. There were no social caste barriers or caste antagonisms—professional classes gave rise only to groups in society.

But with time the social order in India suffered a revolutionary change. The professions became hereditray, making the social grouping rigid. Caste exclusiveness assumed terrific proportions till 'India became a network of groups mutually exclusive,'—when 'a person is born, is married and dies in one particular community, without even having the opportunity to leave it'. Not only this, but the main professions came to selfishly assert their relative group solidarity and indispensability. The Brahmin, allying himself with the warrior-aristocrat, and taking advantage of the prestige religion afforded him, issued the mad dispensation of ostracising a great section of the Indian humanity—the Sudras, who could no longer hear, remember or recite the Sacred Word; and scandalously oppressing the Vaishiyas, through a complex sacrificial ritualism. And India is still paying the penalty for that extreme social tyranny, when the 'untouchable' threatens the caste Hindu with changing his political alignment.

Along side the rich harvest in political. economic and social activities, the Hindus also reaped an abundant reward for their endeavours in the spiritual

field, in unravelling the ultimate reality and ascertaining the bond that subsisted between man and God, the Atman, individual or part-soul, and the Parma-Atman, the Supreme or Whole-Soul.

Religion and Philosophy

The Aryans believed in Nature Gods, like Indra, Agni, Vayu, etc., whom they invoked and propiated. This invocation gave rise to a priest-class, who in course of time, developed an elaborate system of ritual, ceremony and sacrifice. But having settled in India, and coming in contact with the civilized early settlers of the land, they came to reorient their views and philosophy, and sought a fresh solution to the problems of the spirit. The ancient sages of India came to perceive a single masterful Controller of the Universe, in place of the polytheistic Gods in Nature. And yet they did not stop at that. They went still deep into the matter, and detachedly worked out the working of the universe and man's place in it. And they produced an elaborate philosophy of life. The Hindus evolved six systems of Philosophy, the "Khat Darshana", 'the Purva Mimansa,—stressing the significance of rituals; Vedanta—the ultimate search for Brahma of the Upanishads; Yoga,—meditation and certain rules of bodily and mental self-discipline as a means to Supreme Knowledge; Sankhya,—numbers or numerical categories of relationship between the two separate forces of nature and soul; Vaiseshika—an atomic theory of the universe; and Nayaya—logic and reason".

Hinduism thus acquired its all embracing catholicity, being the result of supreme spiritual experience of varied men of God. The transformation of religious thought in India, from the simple Aryan faith to the Metaphysical abstractions of later Hindu thinkers, was indeed revolutionary. "Vedic India, Aryanised, settling down from nomadic life, ceased to pour out its spirit to the beauty and the wonder of the gods that were nature, and found increasing self-expression in deep speculative thought, centred on the shackling chain of birth and death, and rebirth, and beyond the chain, the one Ultimate Reality It is a far cry from the simple songs of the Rigveda to the wistful brooding, 'what good to me is that which shall not win me immortality'? 'The Upanishads multipied, building up philosophic values, through mystic introspection, a spiritual heritage that cast an aureole of glory round Hinduism for all centuries to come'. Reduced to simple form the Hindu philosophers envisage and explain the intricate phenomena of life thus:—There is a Supreme Soul from whom issue all things, and toward whom all tend, even 'as the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and their form'. A soul on its securing a separate form from the Universal Spirit, passes through a considerable series of births, being a plant, an animal, a man, etc. once or many times over, and ultimately returns to the original spirit in light of his Karma or actions, determining its form, character, and above all, the general trend of life, happy or otherwise. This

cycle of birth and death is an arduous business, and each soul or Atman keenly desires its salvation or merging into the Ultimate Soul as early as possible. This can be done if a conscious effort is made to realise one's Atman, the silent and formless depth of the soul, which remains clouded by the obsession that the body, mind, and the ego create in the individual. This is possible by introspection. At the same time the existence of the Universal Soul—the Parma-Atman, the absolute, infinite, impersonal and indescribable, must be realized and the eternal quest of the Individual Soul to merge into the Infinite Soul need be appreciated, for such merger alone secures the ultimate peace that the soul invariably seeks. This final union of the Atman with the Parma-Atman becomes feasible when the individual subdues, by conscious effort, those forces which hinder his realization of the Individual Soul, the Supreme Soul, and the need of their becoming one, and is able to resign his Individual Soul into the Divine, by perceiving the Divine everywhere and in all things, and seek merger through an ever expanding love of all creation.

The common-men, however, could neither appreciate the elaborate ritualism of the Brahmin, nor fathom the intricate reasoning involved in the Upanishadicp hilosophies. The masses therefore remained spiritually ignorant, to be redeemed by the Buddha, "the Enlightened", and the Jain, "the Conqueror of self. Gautama Buddha and Vardhaman Mahavir,

two well-born sons of India of the 6th century B. C., thought fit to seek a solution to human misery, and evolved a new philosophy, which could be understood by the common folk of the land. It was realised that men took too keen and selfish an interest in the affairs of this world and that brought them to grief. A detached outlook on life was the solution they offered to their countrymen— a renunciation of life, an asceticism, a retirement from the world, advocated by Mahavir, and following the Path of the Golden Mean, 'be in the world, yet be out of it,' by Gautama. For strengthening a detached outlook both advocated a virtuous life, or righteous living. Both of them preferred character to caste, and conduct to ritual. Thus both of them spoke against extreme Brahminism which upheld caste and ritual above all else. They wished men to have a broader outlook on life, of humanity and brotherhood. Both the Buddha and the Jain tended to be social reformers also, in addition to their being spiritual guides. And yet there was a fundamental difference in their ideologies. Jainism was more conservative and ascetic, Buddhism more human and ethical. It is on this account that Buddhism was able to spread its wings far out into the world and win its adherents of noble stature from varied nationalities–Asoka Maurya, the Greek Menander, the Kushan Kanishka and the Hindu Harsha. Under the Buddha, "Indian culture was humanised; softened with compassion,

Buddha and Mahavir

with Ahimsa, with reverence for the earth-forms of life" and breathed an 'equalitarian spirit'. Their teachings were not different in any way from earlier philosophies, they were only less Metaphysical, and could therefore be easily grasped by the commonalty of people. And later leaders of Hindu thought, like Shankar Acharya, had to re-orient Hinduism in light of Buddhism and Jainism.

Literature

From the Aryan occupation of the Indian plains to the end of the Hindu period, India produced a vast and varied literature that would be a credit to any country at any time. The four Vedas, Rig, Yagur, Sama, Atharva, containing mainly oblational hymns; their supplementary literature, the Brahmanas, Aryanakas, and Upanishads; the vast works of Pali and Ardha Maghadi Literature, covering Buddhist and Jain lore; the two Indian Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, supplemented by the Bhagvad Gita; the Panchatantra and later Hindu Puranas; and the literary efflorescence of the Gupta period, typified by Shakuntala, the Cloud Messenger, the Cycle of Seasons of Kalidas and Harish-Charitra of Bana, represent ancient Indian Literature just in outline. The Vedas and their supplementary literature not only demonstrate the scientific nature of literary composition, but also mark the freshness of theme and form at the dawn of Indian Civilization. Scholars were as much at home with the poetic form of expression as with that of prose. The flow of Vedic

hymns is uniform with the flow of the Upanishadic prose text. Indian scholars were quite at home with epic poetry also, and the delineation of human character and scenic beauty in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata can rarely be excelled. The supreme effectiveness of fable and mythical literature was appreciated in India quite early, and the Puranas and Panchtantra set the standard for the Arabs and the Europeans. Kalidas, the master dramatist of India, in his plays and poems shows that versatility, genius, and freshness associated with the English Shakespeare. Above all, Bana the court-poet set new and creditable standards in biographic writing when he produced his Harish-Charitra, potraying his patron, the great Harsha.

Education

Education in India also occupied the attention of experts in the country, who evolved an educational system, complete in every respect, which fitted the individual to face the problems of life squarely. The scholar found himself physically strong, intellectually robust, and spiritually sound, at the end of his educational career. Early in the day a thorough and correct knowledge of the Vedic texts, followed by Arithmetical calculations, Grammer, Geometry, Astronomy, Medicine and Ethics completed a scholar's studies. The schooling was ascetic in form and just about two dozen students repaired to the hermit-teacher's hut in the forest fastnesses to learn at his feet and serve him. This was the beginning at

residental education in India. At the zenith of Hindu glory a full course of studies meant the mastery of the sixty arts and sciences which made the scholar self-sufficient and independent. Great centres of learning grew up in India, particularly under Buddhistic patronage, of which the Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramshila Universities are excellent examples. Taxila, near Peshawar, specialised in Vedic, Military and Medical studies; Nalanda. near Gaya, provided competent instruction in Brahminic Philosophy, Grammer, Sankhya, Medicine and Mathematics, Current Literature and the varied Buddhist studies; and Vikramshila, near Bhagalpur in Bengal, excelled in Grammer, Logic, Metaphysics and Ritualism. All of them were residential universities, where the minds were moulded not merely through lectures, but through professorial example. Education was broad-based, though the atmosphere was Buddhistic; and yet so wholesome, that a peep into University life was considered commensurate compensation for journeys from such far-off lands as China, in case scholars failed in the entrance tests.

Architecture

During the period of Hindu ascendancy in India considerable progress was registered in the varied fields of the arts and the sciences, which made India great and glorious. The Hindus developed domestic as well as public architecture of considerable merit. The domestic architecture was mainly of 'wood and plaster, elegant but fragile'. It was

distinguished by the 'little latticed balconies and the slender red-lacquered pillars', which rose like forests. In public architecture, temple and theatre architecture was particularly specialised in. There were temple theatres, village theatres, open air theatres and private theatres attached to palaces, with all sorts of facilities and amenities, like elevated stages, pillared auditoriums. 'mist curtains', spacious and special seating accommodation etc. Temple architecture came into its own with Asoka's attempt to erect structures worthy of the Buddha, in light of the great buildings of the west, about which he came to know. The Stupa architecture, conical in shape, surmounted by an umbrella-like structure, gave rise to Hindu temples, with 'enormous towers, terraced like the Pyramids'. "Heavy and massive in appearance", they were adorned with decorated pillars, columns and cornices'. The Sanchi Stupa, 56ft. high and 121 ft. in diameter, and the temples of Kanchi, Deogarh, Bhitagaon, and Bodh-Gaya are representative specimens of Hindu tempie architecture. The Hindus also excelled in cave-temples, hollowed-out of suitable cliffs, with portals, vestibules, apses etc., and the Udaigiri Brahminical caves, and cave temples at Karli, Ajanta and Ellora are fine specimens of this aspect of Hindu architecture. It is true that much of the Hindu architecture has not survived, on account of the ravages of nature and man, but its influence is evident in the far-eastern countries. The Manasara is the Indian traditional text book on

architecture,—which was greatly elaborated later,—which lays down, within its fifty-eight chapters, rules of construction for all conceivable and varied building structures, affording exact measurements, proportions and orientation. And the most representative architect among the Hindus is Shankhu, one of the nine gems adorning Vikram's Court.

Sculpture

India also gave rise to creditable sculpture during the Hindu period. The cult of image worship, Buddhist and Hindu, afforded extensive impetus to Indian sculpture. Early Indian sculpture was dominated by Greek influences. But by the Gupta Age, sculpture underwent a great transformation, and 'in the place of heavy Gandhara sculptures or life-less sandstone images of Mathura, India gave rise to ethereal, highly intellectual and yet slender sculptures'. The 'clumsy robes swathing the figures, protecting them from eternal cold', were replaced by 'beautiful draperies, clinging softly to the body, like wet muslin, appropriate to the climate'. With consummate artistry the Gupta sculptor softly rounded the limbs, and created a placidly smooth face, being careful to denote the spiritual message through the exquisite hand-gestures, and indicated quiet and deep meditation through halfshut eyes, the thought bent inward, of his object, and thus produced worthy objects imbued with "beauty, grace, restrained elegance, dignity, tranquillity, intellectuality

and spirituality,'' influencing considerably later Indian plastic art.

Painting too was a cultivated art in India. Theoretical texts on the subject, dealing with form, perspective, realistic representation, emotional quality, beauty, technique and colour application, taking shape in the 3rd century A. D., or even earlier.

Painting

Vatsayayana is the traditional author of the 'Cannons of Pictorial Art'. As a result of the fragile nature of the painting medium and the ravages wrought by climate few ancient Indian specimens of paintings have survived. The paintings at Ajanta, Ellora, Sirguja, and Vatapi, all the same present a wholesome picture of the early Indian painter. Realism has been aesthetically combined with a breath of vision, resulting in a wonderful panorama of colour and charm, a vivid humanity immortalised for ever.

The art of Music and Dancing in India is as old as the Gods. Many gods and sages are associated with certain musical instruments and dances. Lord Shiva is the Nataraja, the Master of the Dance, and with him is associated the Hand-drum. Likewise

Music and Dancing

Goddess Saraswati is associated with the Vina, Lord Krishna with the Flute, and Narada and Bharata with their own instruments. The Kathakali of Malabar, the Bharata Natya of Madras, and Manipuri of Assam are the survivals of dancing traditions of ancient

India. The Bharata Natya Shastra—a composition of the early centuries of the Christian era—discusses the basic principles of Indian Music—which is mainly melodic in nature, rather than the European harmonic,—which were greatly elaborated in the Sangit-Ratnakara of the thirteenth century. Thus the varied Indian music of today seeks its origin in old and ancient roots.

Science of Language

The people of ancient India achieved a great deal in the sciences also. The first among the sciences was the science of the language. Sanskrit came to be so scientifically perfected as to possess almost mathematical precision in its terminology. In Sanskrit one could easily express 'the most delicate shades of meaning, the most exact observations, the most wayward of fancies'. And this because of Panini (500 B. C.) and his grammer, in 'eight lectures of four thousand aphorisms', the discovery of which in the 18th century A. D., "opened up the new science of language study, or comparative philology". In the heyday of its glory in the Gupta age, Sanskrit could claim Silpa-Sastras, or metrical treatises, on every conceivable subject of importance, like "law, philosophy, logic, poetics, painting, sculpture, architecture, dancing, music and even love-making". At the Court of Vikram flourished three great masters of the language, Vararuchi—the grammarian, Amarsinha—the lexicographer, and Kalidas—the dramatist. For popular consumption were produced the Itahasas,

and the Puranas; stories of great deeds like Buddhist Avadanas, the Jataka Mala; and story collections affording innocent amusement like Brihat-Katha, Brihat-katha-Manjari, Katha-Sarit-Sagara, Suka-Saptati etc. Men's minds were sought also to be moulded through fables as through the Panchatantra. A specialist type of literature was produced during the Gupta Age, of sophisticated and polished Sanskrit, mainly poetry and drama. The Kavya form of short epic poetry was particularly evolved. Kalidas and Bharavi, Bhartihari and Dandin, Bhatti and Kaviraja, Kalhana and Jayadeva, Bhava Bhuti and Visakh Datta are names to conjure with in ancient Indian Literature for the mastery of the language.

Medicine

The science of Medicine has since very early times been recognised as a highly important branch of knowledge, dealing as it does with human healing. Ayur-veda, or the science of life, was 'one of the recognised Vedic studies'. Atreya, Charaka and Susruta in very early times, and Dhanvantari, Nagarjuna and Vagbhata in Gupta and post-Gupta period are recognised medical authorities in India. Their works have influenced all Asiatic and also European systems of cures for human ailments. Charaka's medical treatise, based on Atreya's teachings and his experience, is an elaborate affair. The classification of remedies from vegetable, mineral and animal sources, the correct time and place for obtaining and administering them, denotes the depth

of his knowledge. It is evident that he was a specialist in children's diseases from the details of the child's care he affords in his treatise, and that he diagnosed the diseases mainly through the pulse beat. He, like the Greek Hippocrates, advocates a high ethical standard among medical-men. Susruta on the other hand was mainly a surgeon. He insists that a medical-man must be endowed with experience in addition to his theoretical knowledge. A person with verbal knowledge only, he likens to a donkey, 'conscious of the weight, but not the quality of his burden'. Major operations of Susruta's time included 'amputations, grafting, setting of fractures, the removal of a foetus and an operation on the bladder for the removal of gall—stones'. The care, and detailed instrument-handling at various operations, described by Susruta, make him sound pretty modern. Nagurjuna is known for the process of distillation, for converting a mild alkali into a caustic one for use as a disinfectant, for using mercury as an internal medicine and for the use of metallic preparations in place of the herbal,—all innovations introduced very much later in Europe with great reluctance. India was the first country to propose and pratise inoculation for smallpox, by inducing a mild form of cowpox. India also developed state and private aided hospitals, both for men and animals, particularly under Buddhistic and Jain influence.

Among the other major sciences developed early in India Mathematics, Physics, and Astronomy occupy

places of great eminence. Vedic Indians seem to have invented the decimal system of calculation pretty early and made use of extremely large numbers. While the Greeks and the Romans were satisfied with the myriad (10^4) and the mille (10^3) as the maximum number, centuries before them the people in India had been accustomed to calculate in numbers of 10 raised to the fourteenth power. Even time was conceived on a vast scale and the idea of the Yugas or Ages had been given birth to. There were to be four Yugas,—Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali, each diminishing in length from Krita onward. The Yugas were conceived to be repeating themselves in cycles and combining into great ages or aeons, each equalling 4320,000,000, years. Considerable amount of geometrical knowledge had also been built up in Vedic times for the construction of the varied shaped alters for the various sacrifices, which posed many geometrical problems, such as 'squaring of a circle, finding the square of the diagonal, constructing equivalent squares and rectangles, triangles equivalent to squares,' etc. Later the Hindus produced such master mathematicians as Aryabhatta, Brahmagupta, and Bhaskara. Aryabhatta made a constant and frequent use of zero, the decimal and the place value system, and invented varied original ways for performing complex mathematical calculations, including the extraction of square and cube roots, and solving quadratic equations. So also did Bhaskar advance

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the mathematical knowledge of his times, particularly through his arithmatic treatise, termed Lilavati, after his daughter, affording rules for intricate calculation, which could solve the propositions posed by him to his daughter thus: "Arjuna irritated in fight shot a quiver of arrows to slay Karna. With half the arrows, he parted those of his antagonist; with four times the square-root of the quiverful, he killed his horses; with three he demolished the umbrella, standard and bow; and with one he cut off the head of his foe. How many were the arrows Arjuna let fly ?" In Physics the royal Astronomer-Mathematician Brahmagupta anticipated Newton's Law of Gravitation, when he maintained that 'all things fall to the earth by law of nature; for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things'. In the field of Hindu Astronomy and Astrology may be mentioned the names of Aryabhatta, Vihara-Mihira, Brahmagupta, Bhaskara, and Kshapanaka. Since Vedic times the movements of the various heavenly bodies were observed, even without any instruments, and astronomical events could he predicted with ease. The spherity, the revolution and the rotation of the earth had been known to the Vedic Indians, and they had also known that the moon owns borrowed light. The Gupta Age was the glorious period of Indian Astronomy, when Aryabhatta accurately calculated the position and courses of the various planets with the aid of epi-cycles and concentric circles, unaided by modern

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scientific instruments.

On the whole India was able to erect a strong edifice of culture and civilization before the invasion of the Muslims, and has remained a source of inspiration to all countries at all times, in things material as well as spiritual.